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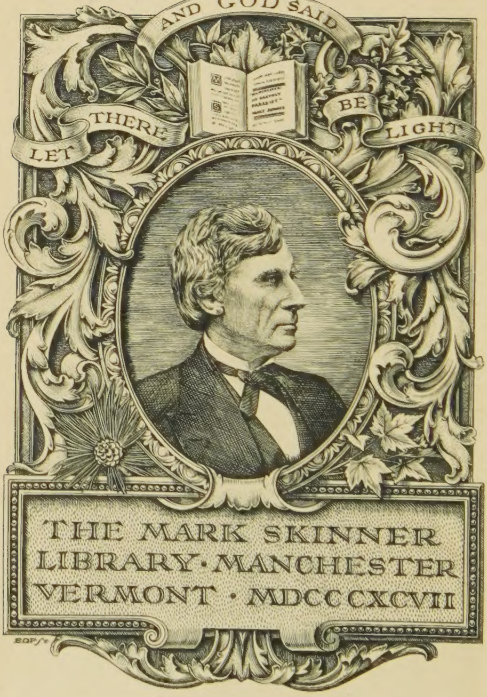
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THE PROSE

OF

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

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THE PROSE

OF

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

WITH
AN INTRODUCTION COMPRISING
SOME FAMILIAR
LETTERS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1900

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION vii

Nature

OUR TAME HUMMINGBIRDS 1
A RHAPSODY OF CLOUDS 25
CHEERFULNESS OF BIRDS 37
THE RED LEAVES ON THE SNOW 41
THE EARTH-SPIRIT'S VOICES. 46
HUMAN NATURE IN CHICKENS. 51
A NEW EARTH IN THE OLD EARTH'S ARMS . 54

Literature and Criticism

SHAKESPEARE'S PROSE 61
AN IMPRESSION OF BALZAC 86
THREE SONNETS 93
THE CHARMS OF SIMILITUDE 99
BOOKS OF REFUGE 103
THE MOST PATHETIC FIGURE IN STORY . 109
GERMAN LYRIC POETRY *vs.* FRENCH . . . 117
THE CLANG-TINT OF WORDS 123
THE OBJECTIONS TO SPELLING REFORM . . 129
PRINCIPLES OF CRITICISM 132
A PRIVATE LETTER 164

Music

Management of the Mind while hearing Music 179
Can Tunes be inherited? 186

Psychology and Ethics

Individual Continuity 190
What do we mean by "Right" and "Ought" 201
The Psychology of Interruptions . . 235
The Bread-and-Butter Moments of the Mind 238
The Slipperiness of Certain Words . 242
The Ethics of the Plank at Sea . . 246
The Mind as a Bad Portrait Painter . 250
The Felt Location of the "I" 254
What is the Oldest Thing in the World? 257
The Free Will of the Bonfire . . . 263
The Invisible Part of this World we live in 270

Education

Should a College educate? 285

Life

Wanted — a Friend 310
Romantic Dispositions 318
The Good Things of our Friend as his Compensations 324
Choosing a Class of People for Extermination 329
The Left-Over Expression of Countenance 336
The Nouveau Cultivé 332
The Keeper-In and the Blurter-Out . 342
Old Morton 346

INTRODUCTION

THE poetry of Edward Rowland Sill has been collected under three separate titles, *Poems*, *The Hermitage and Later Poems*, and *Hermione and Other Poems*. Although he wrote poetry with ease, and chose the form often for the expression of a mood, a passing fancy, a sudden thought, there was in his nature such a demand for expression that it was impossible for him not to use, and with the greatest abundance, the more facile form of prose. His prose ranged from the direct speech of letters to the careful structure of an elaborate essay; but whether he was writing informally or formally, there was little attempt to suppress that eager personality which made him one of the most animated of men of letters. Not that he betrayed the least bit of egotism; the charming quality of his nature was his friendliness, which led him to give unceasingly to others and to take the keenest delight in comrades. It was this spirit of sharing his goods which made him examine himself as he examined nature and literature and music, and

unhesitatingly deliver the result in terms of whimsical, earnest, and unreserved confession. He had an unquenchable curiosity, but it was so utterly devoid of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, that it never excited these elements in others, and made him a sort of lay-confessor to many souls. And when he came to announce freely the results of his scrutiny, he made them so impersonal that the most prying neighbor could not have detected their origin, yet so graphic and shrewd that they were not lost in vague generalities.

His habit of mind and his hatred of petty personality led him to prefer in most cases either a pseudonym or the still more grateful shelter of anonymity. He enjoyed especially the hospitality of the Contributors' Club in *The Atlantic Monthly*. The method of this table-talk especially pleased him, for it exactly suited his own way of dashing off impromptus of prose, mingled sometimes with ready verse, and the shortness of the essays permitted in it was adapted to the little flights of fancy and fun in which he delighted. He was therefore a very frequent contributor, sometimes having three or four diverse bits in a single number, and provoking by his light, incisive attacks more responses probably than any other member of that game of blindman's buff.

It is largely from the Contributors' Club that the contents of this book are derived. That is to say, the greater number of papers is drawn from it; the longer ones are sometimes from *The Atlantic*, sometimes from papers printed on the Pacific coast, and sometimes from papers read but not printed. The division under different headings is intended merely to classify rudely the mass of his prose writing. The distinctions between the parts must not be looked for too narrowly. Sill was so versatile and his mind ran so readily from one aspect of a subject to another, that it would be idle to ask for any very hard and fast division, but the grouping will serve to show something of the range which his mind took. No attempt has been made to indicate the sources of the several papers, nor to arrange the contents in any exact chronological order. These things are of little consequence in the case of so free a giver as Sill. One might nearly as well expect to date and locate a good talker's conversation.

For the sake of those who may be making through this book their first acquaintance with Mr. Sill, a brief account of his short life is reproduced here from the Note to the first collection of his Poems. He was born in Windsor, Connecticut, in 1841, and graduated at

Yale College with the class of 1861. He went to California not long after graduation, and at first engaged in business, but in 1867 returned East with the expectation of entering the ministry, and studied for a few months at the Divinity School of Harvard University. He gave up the purpose, however, married, and occupied himself with literary work, translating Rau's *Mozart*, holding an editorial position on the *New York Evening Mail*, and bringing out a volume of poems. His peculiar power in stimulating the minds of others drew him into the work of teaching, and he became principal of an academy in Ohio. His California life, however, had given him a strong attachment to the Pacific coast and a sense that his health would be better there, and accordingly, on receiving an invitation to a position in the Oakland High School, he removed to California in 1871, remaining there till 1883. In 1874 he accepted the chair of English Literature in the University of California, and identified himself closely with the literary life which found its expression in magazines and social organization. Upon his return to the East with the intention of devoting himself more exclusively to literary work, he began that abundant production which has been hinted at, and which, anonymous for the most

part, was rapidly giving him facility of execution and drawing attention to the versatility, the insight, the sympathetic power, the inspiring force which had always marked his teaching, and bade fair to bring a large and appreciative audience about him. He lived remote from the press of active life, always close to the centre of current intellectual and spiritual movements, in the village of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, where he died after a brief illness, February 27, 1887.

Some of the details of this uneventful life, and some of the characteristics of a very lovable nature, may be gathered from the following extracts from his familiar correspondence. His letters were jotted down more hastily than his most casual writing for an open public, and suffer thus less from a fragmentary use than would be the case had he relied much upon this form of writing; but he was always, as it were, writing to his friends when he wrote his papers and brief articles; these bits from his letters therefore should be taken as little more than notes. The effort has been made in the selection to trace something of Mr. Sill's thought about himself in the successive changes of his outward life; most attention thus has been given to the formative period, though indeed that term might well be

applied to his entire life, so open did he keep all the inlets into his mind and heart. Some of the letters or parts of letters are taken from the *Memorial* privately printed in 1887.

TO H. H.

SACRAMENTO, April 2, 1862.

DEAR HENRY, — Arrived — so soon — safe and well — ought n't I to be thankful, after such a voyage? We landed in San Francisco last week Tuesday, March 25, — as to Shears, glad to get ashore — as to me, rather sorry, for I enjoyed the voyage exceedingly, and dreaded to meet my dubious prospects on shore. Not that Shears *did n't* enjoy it — for he *did*, hugely, — but he 's got a home, you know, in San Francisco, and has something to do — viz., the law. By the way, he 's got a very pleasant home there, too — father, brother, brother's wife and brother's baby — the latter being the prettiest extant.

The life at sea just suited me — giving me a sound digestion, a deliciously pure atmosphere to see the stars through, and that utter *seclusion* which has always been my longing — secure, too, from any haunting restlessness to be *doing* something — that relentless feeling, you know, which is always jogging your elbow whenever you get fixed comfortably in a self-

ish, idle seclusion, whispering, "Get up and go to work! fellow-men — fellow-men — go to work — go to work!" But out there I *could n't* do anything, nor have anything to do with anybody, if I tried — so I took my ease with a good conscience. Well, we had a good time, and it did us good — is n't that a pretty satisfactory report?

We did n't write the book, for we concluded (not without serious talks on it) that we had n't enough *worthy material* for a book. You say Pshaw! at that — I can hear you with great distinctness, way off here — but though there were specious and tempting considerations in favor of it, the sober and reasonable course was *not* to — and so we did n't. I kept a pretty full journal, which you may read if you 'll come out here. I wish I had you here — I 'd tell you everything I saw and did and thought on the way — but as that can't be, I 'll scribble this sheet full and wait till I see you — which won't be many years — for you will be in New England I hope, and I shall be back in two years or less. Well, we got off, as you know, December 9, into a fogbank — out of which came forth a roaring gale, which did make us seasick — oh, it *did* — I hope Shears will write you about it — *I 'm* not equal to the occasion. After the first fortnight, though, we

mounted our sea legs and never got off them. Wonder if you 'd look out our course on a map if I gave it to you? Here 't is, anyway.

. . . . . .

Frank K. writes that you are class poet. I am very glad — it 's a very pleasant thing to have, and I am glad they had the sense to do it. Don't "put off" now — mind you don't. I hope that you will do a better thing than I did — something that will have a good influence. Don't say anything you are not *sure* is true — for there is enough *certain* truth. God bless you in that as in everything.

TO THE SAME

July 24.

Dear Henry, — I wrote you a long letter when I first arrived here, which perhaps never has reached you — for I sent a good many about that time by the overland route, some of which I know were not received. Your letter to Sex and me came in due season — but I have been hoping that mine would at last get to you, and that I should hear from you again by this time. I don't think it 's best to wait any longer, though. I have no idea where you will be by the time this has reached the States, but I shall inclose it to Frank, trusting to his knowing of your whereabouts. I want to hear

all about the winding up of your College life — and *about* the Poem — *and* the Poem — Have n't you sent me one? If you have n't sent several to me, you deserve stripes — for "private distribution" you know, as well as the one for public reading. And after all our ponderings, what are you going to do? and where? Study law at Harvard, I rather hope.

As for me, I have come to it finally, like all the rest of 'em — I am to study law. And what a lawyer I shall make! I suppose I am one of the first, though, who ever determined on *that* profession for the benefit it would be to himself spiritually. Yet that 's my crotchet. We are (some people don't seem to be — but you and I and a few of us certainly are) planted down in the midst of a great snarl and tangle of interrogation points. We want to find — we *must* find — some fixed truth. Either we are wrong and the vast majority of thinkers right, or they are wrong, and *we* right — and that, too, not on one point, but a thousand — points of the vastest scope and importance. As Kingsley puts it, we are set down before that greatest world-problem — "Given Self, to find God." So, considering that for such tasks the mind needs every preparation, skill and practice in drawing close distinctions, subtileness in detecting sophistry, strength and pa-

tience to work at a train of thought continuously long enough to follow its consequences *clear out*, and some systematized memory (if for nothing but holding and duly furnishing your own thoughts when needed) — I say, seeing no better — or rather, no *other* — way to gain these but by entering the law, thitherwards I have set my face. I have sifted it all down to this conclusion — that in teaching, or in Literature, or even in following up some chosen science (much less some chosen art, as Poetry), the mind would not get fitted for that serious work which is before it. In them, it might become cultivated, stored with knowledge, in some sense developed — but not *disciplined*. Now just take that one question alone — Is Christianity true? What impudence it would be in us to consider that *settled* in the negative, until we felt that our intellects were as strong, as capable of close, protracted reasoning, as little liable to be misled by sophistry, as all those greatest men who have time after time settled it for themselves in the affirmative. I for my part can see no way in which I can at the same time earn a living, and get the *active Powers* of my mind thoroughly disciplined, except by studying law. . . .

TO THE SAME

March 26, 1864. Saturday night.

DEAR HEN, — It is only one of many disadvantages of letters, as a voice between friends, that each letter can be merely the representation of one particular *mood*. And if it so happens, by an accidental trick of circumstances, that all one's letters are written at the same hour of the day, and therefore under the influence of one and the same mood, he will get only one little aspect of himself conveyed to his friend. Such seems to be my fate. I write always in the evenings (unless occasionally I happen to wedge in an hour Sunday somewhere) after being wearied by the doings (and getting-done-to's) of the day. Consequently I suppose I always seem to you to be tired and depressed. Which result is undesirable. Because it is always — must be — disagreeable to an honest person, the idea of obtaining commiseration under false pretenses, and partly because, next to fully knowing — understanding — my Beloveds, I like to have them understand the whole of *me* — and to be always thought of as a broken reed one does n't like. Now this is not pride — which I am trying to express — not the kind of feeling which made us when little chaps hold in under

indignities, and swear we did n't care a bit, and go behind the door to snivel unseen — but it is only just as I said — a fervid desire to be known by, as I would know, the few nearest.

I wonder if it ever is actually to happen that our broken threads of relationship shall be joined again. It is just like the "faults" they come to in mining — the strata run along, you know, side by side till — plump! they come up against a wall of partition — and the question is then, do they go on again together on the other side, beyond? and if so, how far must we go before coming to the junction again?

Next month I am going to "move" — shall quit the Post Office, and go up to a little town some twenty miles north of Sac. — Folsom — (*Foolsom* — in the barbarous dialect of the natives here — I don't know but the name is a fearful augury of my wisdom in going there.) Goes I there into a Bank — changing my delightful employment of peddling postage-stamps (*stomps* — they call 'em here) for that of buying gold dust from Mexicans, Digger Indians, and Chinamen, who are all great at the "surface-mining" in that vicinity.

California (so far as that means the natural and not the human aspect thereof) is inexpressibly beautiful just now. The trees are all

just "out," in their spring vesture — the fields full of flowers — nobody has any right to talk about fields *carpeted* with flowers, till he has seen them here, or, I suppose, in the still more Tropical climates. Great gorgeous fellows, you know — like all the conservatories you ever saw broken loose and romping over the wild plains here, exulting and irrepressible. And not only these superb sorts, but come to stoop down and look closer you find multitudes of the least wee blossoms — little stars, scarcely bigger than a pin's head, blue, and pure white, perfect as gems. Only so for a couple of months or three months — then the parching, rainless summer bakes the ground, and browns the dry grass to a monotonous tint that makes one hot and thirsty even to look at it.

And as with the vegetation, so with the children born here. Little human blossoms, such as one rarely sees in the cold Atlantic States. Mites of girls, with complexions like porcelain which you look at the light through — and soft, beautiful eyes. And little boys, fair and delicate as girls — bright and gentle, but so fragile looking that it seems as though to speak suddenly to them would shock them out of existence. They come around to my Post Office windows, toddling bits of creatures, asking for letters as sedate and grave as old men — and

trotting off with them in their little hands, the letter almost as big as the sprite that carries it. Whereat the clerk, Sill, pokes his head contemplatively through the window, and marvels at the climate which produces such things.

So ! and now you owe me *two* letters.

Good-night to both of you.

TO THE SAME

February 28, 1865.

Dear Henry, — I 've been reading Theology lately. You spoke of the legion of things which claim our attention — verily, verily. But moral philosophy stands first — then metaphysics — then down, to medicine, literature, sociology, καλology, history, etc. I keep a little fountain babbling and plashing in my brain, by reading, nearly every day, a word of Tennyson or Browning (Mrs. I mean) or Ruskin or Bible or somebody. I would like to take your arm and start on a trip through moral philosophy, by evenings. How I want to see you and your pearl.

I 'll leave this as just a note — for reminder. I want to learn the organ when I come East. What will it cost me, besides time ? It is in me if I do not get too old before it can come out.

Love to vos — Yours.

TO THE SAME

San Francisco, August 6, 1865.

People think that a thinking man's speculations about religion, etc., interfere with his daily life very little — but how certain conclusions do take the shine out of one's existence! These Spencer chaps may be very excellent — but to me there is an apple of Sodom smack about it all — Little pigmies — what kind of babbling is this for worm-meat to emit? "For man" (not even with a capital m) "is not as God." And I more than suspect that the said worms lick their chaps over the brain, as over the common tidbits of the grave.

I send a pamphlet containing a pome by me. It is only the drippings of some very few and lean weeks, when I had too much dragging business work to do for any poetry to come out of it. They thought it extraordinary out here though.

TO THE SAME

Oakland, June 17, 1866.
Sunday, P. M.

Dear Henry, — Steamer sails to-morrow, and I want to send one of my usual unsatisfactory and hasty scrawls as a mere sprawl to show that I 'm still alive, and that however

little else there may be in my mind at any given time, you at least are in it. I have been loafing all the afternoon so far, and feel exceedingly idle and good for nothing. Have been lying on my back and talking with Shears on all the subjects in the Universe one after the other, as the tide of two lazy minds drifted us — not enough headway on to steer by, and so floated through politics, religion, education, social progress, etc. Wish you could have been here to take the stroke oar. I 've been writing a lot of poetry. Shall want to consult with you about it when I see you. Have got one poem of about a thousand lines and a lot of short ones, about as much more, enough to make a gay little vol. if illustrated a little, and got out nicely — but as to the inside, don't know — the more I write the less satisfied I am with any of my doings in poetry — verily, art is different from handicraft as Grimm says — only the perfect works ought to be given to the public — a bad boot or a tolerable article of cloth may be worth offering for sale, but when it comes to offering tolerable art — after Tennyson and the Brownings — 't won't do — a poor devil ought to be hung for doing it, unless he be very poor, when his punishment might be commuted into imprisonment for life with only Tupper and the Country Parson for

food and drink — in the way of stale toast or so.

I 'm reading Marx's "Musical Composition." Ever read it? and do you cultivate music any now? You ask (by the way, you have persistently, and without the least provocation on my part, written uniformly jolly and good letters — may your reward be great some day — though I don't see how it 's to come) what I — we — want to do when we get on there, with the view of cultivating the ground a little for us two old seeds to plant ourselves in.

I can't tell at all till I have got there, found how my health is going to be, how much chance of literary success there is for me, how much of musical, and more than all, till I have been out to Ohio and seen my friends there.

I can't ever preach — that has slowly settled itself in spite of my reluctant hanging on to the doubt. I can't solve the problems — only the great schoolmaster Death will ever take me through these higher mathematics of the religious principia — this side of his schooling, in these primary grades, I never can preach. I shall teach school, I suppose.

How gay it will be to see you! How we will enjoy renewing all the past except the nonsense and absurdities of it.

I will leave the rest of this blank for the squire to add on to-night.

Vale, old soul. Yrs.

TO THE SAME

CAMBRIDGE, April 12, 1867.
Friday morning.

DEAR HENRY, — There seems to be a gap, just in here, after reading the quantum of Plutarch, when there is nothing that *must* be did — so I'll employ it to keep up our acquaintance.

I got a note from Taintor yesterday with his card — 229 Broadway — calling for songs. Sent him one batch thro' you, and a batch and botch of one this morning. I hope the Taintorian brain is not shrewd enough to detect the fact that they are trash of the first water (or as Sex says on a late occasion, of the first milk-and-water). By the way, vide "Galaxy" of April 15 — Translation by Sex of Lessing's "Ring" — good thing. Good joke on me that I send to the "Galaxy" and get kicked, and my chum gets accepted. If I c'd lick him I w'd, but he boxes me out of time hitherto. I can beat him at Base Ball tho', and mildly whopped him yesterday at quoits. He officiated at Prayers yesterday evening for the first time and did it first-rate. My turn comes to-night.

I am enjoying my opportunities here hugely. They give me books and let me alone — what more could a man ask? Besides some good lectures outside — Agassiz, etc. I went to a sacred concert last Sunday night in Music Hall. It was very fine. I don't know that I ever enjoyed music so much. Did n't hear the great organ though, so I am going over to hear that in an orchestral concert this P. M. Sunday night there was glorious orchestra music, and Arbuckle had a cornet arrangement of Adelaide with orchestra which nearly drew my heart out of my body. I have always raved about that song, but never heard it perfectly given before. What a splendor brass is when exquisitely played. How it winds and winds into one's very Ego, and tangles itself up with the emotions and passions and soars up with them. The wood sings all *around* one — the strings wail and implore *to* us — but the brass enters in and carries one off bodily. Do you concur? I want to hear that great organ — it was music only to look at it — a great, dark, shadowy cathedral looming up at the end of the immense Hall — Apollo Belvidere up in a niche opposite, looking scornful, as if to say that all that solemn, shadowy, bitter-sweet music — the heart-broken triumph — the fire of tears — is poor by the side of his memories of

the Greek health and energy, and music that was sunshine dissolved in wine. But one looks back to the statue of the Master in front of the organ, and thinks the man is truer than the false god.

Delightful spring weather — trees coming out — grass green. Nature is all under good subjection though about here — not even a Tutor's Lane to refresh the wild part of a man.

Wisconsin gone for Woman Suffrage! It 's gay, is n't it — Massachusetts must hang her head and be second chop hereafter.

Yours ever,

E. R. Sill.

I think pomes must be anonymous. Are you going to arrange for summer?

TO THE SAME

Cuyahoga Falls, August, 1867.
Sunday, P. M.

Dear Henry, — I wonder how and where this hot afternoon finds you. It is too hot here to do anything, yet I am moved to write you a sweltering word or two.

I have determined not to return to Cambridge. There could be no pulpit for me after going through there, except as an independent self-supported minister, which of course is open

to any one with a purse. I came reluctantly to that conclusion. Another person, even with my opinions in Theology, might have judged differently. It is no sentimentalism with me — it is simply a solemn conviction that a man must speak the truth as fast and as far as he knows it — truth to *him*. I may be in error — but what I *believe* is my sacred truth, and must not be diluted. When I get money enough to live on I mean to preach religion as I believe in it. Emerson could not preach, and now I understand why.

So, the alternatives.

School-teaching always has stood first. No decent salaries in this country. No freedom to follow my own way. No position available so far as I know. Hence, California.

TO C. T. H. P.

[Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio,]
January 23, 1870.

Dear Chief, — I am very glad to have you writing to me again about the Oakland matter, chiefly because it continues to let me know that you would like to have me come back there among you. I am queer, I 'm afraid, about my way of looking (or not looking) at future plans. Whether it springs most from faith, or a Mussulman sort of "fatality" de-

spair of individual planning and trying, I let the future alone more than most seem to: perhaps too much. Except as it affects the convenience of others who may hinge more or less on our edges, I don't see much advantage in taking thought far ahead, especially as to details.

Wherever I am, and however, I mean to try to do and be certain things (especially the doing; for I find, looking at my life a week at a time, that has been the core, nowadays) but the where and how I leave till the last minute. So I know I am to be here till July next, and beyond that I don't look, except that your words about Oakland bring to mind vividly that 't would be very pleasant to *be* there.

I 'm not fitting very fast to be good in any one department of teaching. I am scattered all over my school here, and with 128 scholars, and all manner of branches, Lat., Gk., German, Chemistry, Hist., Geog., Arith., Astron. and the beginnings of everything else a'most, you see how good a chance I have to be anything in particular. I am a miserable smatterer, and likely to be; getting my lessons for each day ahead, and not making any very profitable acquisitions, except perhaps about boy and girl nature in general.

I would like to have a window opened

through which I might get a draft of fresh communion with the lives of you folks there. Can't you appoint some one of the crowd as sec'y to write me what you do and what it is all about, from week to week? And when I say "crowd" I remember that after all there are but few of you.

Strange that on such a great planet, alive with us, our thoughts and loves and sympathies should just cluster a half-dozen here and a half-dozen there, and count all the "world," so far as we care, on our fingers.

I suppose we are reading the same telegraphic news, every day, and hearing the same topics talked, and the wives are playing the identical pieces on the pretty-much-identical pianos (only ours is out of tune at present) and so on. Yours,

E. R. Sill.

TO H. H.

Berkeley, Cal., February 13, 1880.

Dear Henry, — Yours just rec'd. Thank you for the information for my inquiring student, about the book-man. I knew about the Social Science Associations, but my point was that they don't go to the bottom difficulty: viz., what *end* are we after? And secondly, is it the end we had *better* be after. My notion is that

Spencer is the only man that has begun to answer that question — namely in the Data — and in previous hints which he that did n't run too fast might read, and that the Associations have been puttering about Contagious Diseases, Drainage, Prison Reform, and other such excellent matters to work at, but the perfection of which would leave us very little better off than at present. The best thing you can do with such people as we have now is to let the contagious diseases thin 'em out a little, perhaps.

As to your thought that I have scattered, and ought to make myself "favorably known." My dear fellow, I like your caring for me enough to say this and wish this, but — if you knew about my life of late years and my ideas of life, you would see. I am not and have n't been trying to make myself favorably known. The devil take any one that *is* trying for it. I have been working to educate, in some high sense, successive classes of young people ; and meanwhile to know more about education, and especially literature as a means of it, and about education in its relation to society and life. I am contented to die unknown, if I can arrive at the truth about certain great matters, and can put others in the way thereof. If there is anything which utterly disgusts me and makes

me howl aloud and swear, it is these infernal fools who are fighting to get their names abroad, and care for no other work. That a man like Spencer should *be* well known is a matter of course and all right; but he has not cared for that. Let a man work his work in peace, and the devil take his name — the less likely to get anything more of him than that.

But I am ever yours.

TO M. W. S.

AMBLESIDE, WESTMORELAND,
September, 1881.

This violet is a descendant of the one Wordsworth is always writing about. At least I picked it to-day on the side of the path where he must have walked many times, between his house and Stock Ghyll Force. It is a beautiful region, this of the English Lakes; but one does n't see, after all, why poetry should not be thought and felt and written as well at Niles or Berkeley as in Westmoreland. The Alps and this region you must see some day.

In haste, with regards to you all, from both of us. Yours,

E. R. SILL.

TO THE SAME

CUYA. FALLS,
Tuesday morning, May 15, 1883.

Your so large a letter with your own hand was rec'd last evening, in the midst of some petty personal bothers and obscure mental generalizations not favorable to the scheme of things: so that it served admirably the purpose of foreign travel and new scenes to the invalid, and I went to bed much refreshed and lightened up.

All our ordinary bothers only need an outside point of view to let the sawdust out of them (rapid change of figure: Shaksperian), and to get into another person's world gives us a big parallax for proper estimates of our own orbits. What fairy mythology is there, of a man who shifts from one life to another and back all the time: so when I read your letters I am a Californian out and out — or in and in.

By the way, I sent the volume — (it needs a name: what shall I call it? Little Piecrusty) to Matthew Arnold, and he was so gracious as to send me a letter expressing his pleasure at some things in it — briefly — and, by the way, his much agreement with my H. Spencer article in the "Atlantic." They tell me, by the way to the third power, that Youmans has made a

furious assault on it — but I shan't look at it till I want to write again on the subject. . . .

TO A PUPIL

June 6, 1881.

Dear Lucy, — Your question of 26th May was too good a one to leave so long unanswered. It was not left as being too *hard* to answer, but I have been very busy, and really could not find time to settle myself to say anything on so important a question till to-night, and now it must be a brief note. The real value of "being well read" seems to me to be in the wider and truer life it gives us. By "wider" I mean that our thoughts and feelings and purposes are more complex and more consonant with the complexity and manifoldness of the universe we live in: the microcosm gets a little — even if a very little — nearer in quality and quantity to the macrocosm. The crystal leads such a narrow life — just along one little line — a single law of facet and angle: the plant a little wider: the fish a little wider: and the different sorts of *people* widening and widening out in their inner activities — and much according to their *reading* (since living human contact is not possible, except with the few relatives and neighbors).

And by *truer* life, I mean truer to nature:

more as we were meant to be: the inner relations, between *ideas*, corresponding closer to the outer relations — or "real" relations — between *things*. These real thing-relations are in fact very complex and vastly inclusive: so must the thoughts and feelings be, if "true," or truly correspondent or mirror-like to them.

I don't see that culture (unless you spell it wrong) needs — or tends at all — to cut one off from human warmth. Are not some of the "best read" people you know or hear of, some of the broadest-hearted also? The very essence of culture is shaking off the nightmare of self-consciousness and self-absorption and attaining a sort of Christian Nirvana — lost in the great whole of humanity: thinking of others, caring for others, admiring and loving others.

I should like to have you write me more fully about it some time.

Yours sincerely.

TO E. B.

February 2, 1883.

Dear Miss B. — It's a bad time to take up trees in the winter; ground is frozen; roots can't go down. This is a parable. If it were summer here, no doubt I should be taking long walks and going fishing, and mooning

about, nights — and keeping my old environment out of my head as thoroughly as possible. But it 's winter — the dead vast and middle of it (as Howell quotes of the summer) — and my roots are all in the air as yet, and I feel extremely queer. We are supposed to have got settled. I have established a writing-table with the birds contiguous (as near a window as I dare put 'em for fear of freezing their noses off: you remember how the cold air pierces in between the sashes of a window like a long thin knife?). Mr. Kellogg's "Berkeley bucket" of last Xmas stands on the table with some rather timid-looking greenhouse pinks and geraniums in it. They manage to have some green leaves and posies under a glass — but what looking gardens! They were spaded in the fall, so that when not mercifully veiled with snow they look all lumpy mud, frozen. Gracious! what a looking world.

I am supposed to be entered on a mad career of literary work. Have so far only written some very mild verses — suitable for nursery use in some amiable but weak-minded family. But then I 've been skating twice! Think of that — real ice, too. You can make Mr. Metcalf feel bad about that, if you tell him — and make him think he 'd like to be here; but he would n't.

It's a curious illusion of yours out there, that you can go out and pick flowers and hear leaves rustle and see grass grow and feel thorough-going sunshine. You can't, you know, 'cause it's winter everywhere: snow and ice, or frozen slush and mud — it *must* be. *I* used to have that same hallucination when I was out there. Queer. Effect of the climate, I s'pose.

Did you like the sea? Then you would like Russell's "Lady Maud" (and his other books). Wonderful descriptions of the sea and life in ships and storms.

You are going to write, you know.

With love to you all, yours faithfully.

E. R. Sill.

TO ——

[Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio,]
March 29, 1883.

My Dear Ed, — You are getting on toward the close of the Second Act — the college days: and no doubt the management of the Third Act begins to occupy your mind a good deal — and perhaps to vex it a little. What to do with one's life gets to be a large question toward the close of Senior Year. In my own, I was saved a part of the question, for my health was frail and threatened me a little, so

that the *immediate* duty was plain enough — to cut and run ; which I did, on a long sea voyage ; it was a toss-up which way it should be, among all the oceans and continents, but it happened to be to California. I had pretty much determined that I would try to get a better aim than the common ones. "I could not hide that *some* had *striven*," at least, whatever they had "attained." Egoism, pure and simple, had somehow always struck me — theoretically — as mighty paltry for a grown-up man ; a kind of permanent *child*-condition. And I cast about for some way of combining service with bread and butter. The ministry, or teaching, I finally settled it must be for me. It was a little narrow, and conceited, too, to confine the choice to those two. I can see now that there are lots of ways to serve — more even than ways to get bread and butter.

A sort of desperate self-distrust made me choose teaching, of the two ; but before I got at it, this same morbid notion made me skulk from that. I said, in a kind of ridiculous nightmare of diffidence, "I never can do it — never." So I clerked in a P. O. and then in a bank. At last I went to a Theological Seminary (in Cambridge, because there you did not have to subscribe to a creed, definitely, on the start) and thought I would try the preliminary

steps, anyway, toward the ministry. But here I finally found I did not believe in the things to be preached, as churches went, as historical facts. So I desperately *tried* teaching.

I set my teeth together, took a saddle-horse, rode about the country and hunted up a locality I liked the looks of, with a clean little schoolhouse and wholesome looking farm people about it, and taught that country school. I found there was no difficulty in *doing* it, after a fashion at least; so I kept on, — up to the date of my leaving you in California. Toward the last I kept on, not so much because I still felt that this was the only altruistic-egoistic occupation for a man — my view had broadened from that — but rather because it was the thing I had learned to do. One can't switch off after a certain age. Besides, it was *one* thing, certainly, among others, worth doing. There are few men that find after forty that there are more things than one that they know how to do even decently well.

One thing is clear: a year or two of teaching is good honest work for any one — an advantage to others, and to self (for others in the future), as well. But if you knew you should then go into medicine, I think I should not wait but go into it at once. You may think medicine ministers only to the body — but,

1. the body is a necessary condition of higher things, and 2. a good physician finds himself in one of the most influential positions in the community for good. Nor need his work be confined to his lancet and pill-boxes (though there 's a nobleness about those, when you think of the relations of mind and body), but there is an endless range of studies, and perhaps of writing, possible to such a profession.

One thing we must try to realize. Our individual drop of force is only one in a great sea. Perhaps, even if we saw just what particular piece of work the world most needed, we should not be the man for it. I see a number of things that need tremendously to be done ; but *I* can't do them. I was n't properly endowed, or I had n't, and could n't have got, the training for it. Meantime I do what my hand finds to do and try not to fret. For example, I have just effected the organization of a Library Association in this little manufacturing town — which very likely will prove to be the most valuable piece of work I have ever done, or shall ever do. May be one ought to say — for who knows tendencies and subtleties of outcome — the least harmful piece of work. Anyway, the thing is not to spoil *too* much time and brains trying to be sure of the absolutely best work — but to use all reason-

able effort to see, and then — even if in vexatious doubt — to strike into the most *probably* sensible course, and work like a locomotive. One can at least fix his course for a *year* ahead, and agree with his conscience to let him alone to work at that *for* the year. And so year by year, if no other way is possible to one's temperament, one can get through a fine stent of work in a lifetime.

Faithfully yours, E. R. Sill.

TO E. B.

Windsor, June 16, 1883.

My dear Neighbor, — I have been making a pilgrimage to Ellington to-day. I wish you could have gone with me. It has been, to begin with, a perfect June day, and you remember the look of it in these regions: the blue sky with white dapples in it, the lustrous leaves not yet long enough out of their sheaths to have lost their tender new green, the fields full of daisies (too full, the honest farmer would say — but not too full for the passing vagabones to enjoy), the laurel glimmering in the woods (remember it?), the roads as they run through thickety places full of the smell of wild grape blossoms (remember 'em?), the rye soft and wavy (nothing but rye in the sandy plains betwixt here and Ellington), or a little tobacco and spindly corn — plain living and

high thinking must be the rule out around there among the farmers. The soil looks better in Vernon.

Ellington is beautiful. It might be just a little *quiet* in the winter, for gay people like you, but at this season it is great. There 's a glorious silence there. I saw a man, and a boy with a toy wagon, and another man, all on the street at once. But they went into dooryards and were seen no more. What a dignity and placid reserve about the place ! The houses all look like the country-seats of persons of great respectability who had retired on a competence — and retired a great ways while they were about it. And what *big* houses they used to build. *Used* to, I say, because there is n't a house over there that looks less than a thousand years old : not that they look old as seeming worn or rickety at all, but old as being very stately and wise and imperturbable. I am struck, all about here in Connecticut, with the well-kept-up look of the houses. Paint must be cheap — no, 't is n't that. Paint is probably pretty dear ; but they believe in keeping everything slicked up. Yet there are a few oldest of the old houses that came out of the ark I know. One on the road to Rockville, right hand side, may be half a mile or less from your house, never painted, all collapsed, door frames and window frames slumped down on one side,

everything leaning, ready to tumble in a heap the next high wind.

I gazed west at the green and east at the hills, and south at the fields and Rockville in the distance, and reflected that you had done the same on similar days a great many times. Oh, I had quite a sentimental day of it, I assure you. I quite entered into your point of view, and it was almost as if you were there — if you only had been aware of it.

Yours, E. R. SILL.

TO C. T. H. P.

July 16, 1883.

I am just back from a summering in the ancient and somnolent pastures of New England: some weeks at my old home, Windsor, in the Connecticut River valley — you remember how green and peaceful that region is, cornfields and hayfields, and elm-shaded streets and maple-shaded houses (with green blinds, mostly shut tight), and patches of their pretty woods — the trees only shrubs to a Californian eye, but ever so fresh and graceful, and lustrous with rain or dew: a week in the White Mts. — they, too, dwarf varieties, but capable of good coloring and various picturesque "effects;" and a few days on the Maine seashore.

Yours, E. R. SILL.

January 4, 1884.

You would like this winter weather. Remember how the snow creaks under foot, in zero-cold ? and the good smell of frozen oxygen, and how your mustache freezes up, and how the fields of blue-white snow stretch away everywhere, and Pan retires all his passions and emotions from the landscape, and leaves only pure intellect — cold and white and clear ? — One ought to have, tho', a house about seven miles square, full of open fires and open friends — both kept well replenished and *poked up*. I should like to see some of these winter scenes, and some of these sunsets, out of *your* west window. I wish you a very happy rest-of-the-year. Write when you can.

Yours, E. R. Sill.

TO M. K.

August 11, 1883.

Dear Mr. K. — Yours of 4th was received yesterday, and papers containing the same sad news of Mr. Crane's death. I had heard that he was seriously ill, but afterward that he was supposed to be out of danger; so that I was greatly surprised when the news came. Somehow he seemed a man that would not die : there seemed such an amount of quick, active life in him. I always thought of him as so

thoroughly alive. He always came to my recollection as he looked when speaking in the Club — perfectly quiet in manner and tone, but every fibre of his brain evidently electric. I had written him a letter a few weeks ago, from an impulse to tell him how well I appreciated him and liked him. I am specially glad now that I did. Another evidence that a man had better always follow his first impulse. And it was *kept* clear and reinforced all the time by an integrity of intellect that made him look first of all to see what was true. Other men were after the right sound, or the prudent word, or the polite one, or the amiable one, or one that would stop a gap when ideas were wanting. He was after the exact and unadulterated *fact*. And my brain was actually in love with his, ever since I first knew him.

Personally he never in the least warmed toward me; but I never in the least looked for that. One of the things that made me like him was that I seemed to see that he divined my own limitations, and weighed me pretty accurately. I admired him the more from the fact that he did not at all admire me,[1] and I liked him the more from the fact that his intellectual honesty seemed to do justice to mine

[1] In fact, Mr. Crane cherished a peculiar admiration for Professor Sill.

— a thing which from boyhood has been a permanent craving with me. Well, I did n't expect him to die, and I am mighty sorry to lose him from this world. Yes, he is one of the men that help one to believe in the immortality of the soul. I think Crane — the real man — must be, somewhere, to-day, just as truly as he was a month ago.

I am very much indebted to you for your letters. I don't at all mean to have life all slip away without seeing you again in the flesh.

Faithfully yours, E. R. Sill.

TO M. W. S.

Cuy. Falls, October 25, 1883.

Did you know Kant wrote some poems when young (I don't know but later than young)? This is one : —

" Was auf das Leben folgt, deckt tiefe Finsterniss;
Was uns zu thun gebührt, des [sic] sind wir nur gewiss,
Dem kann, wie Lilienthal, kein Tod die Hoffnung rauben,
Der glaubt, um recht zu thun, recht thut, um froh zu glauben."

Have you read Daudet's bit of reminiscence of Turgénieff in "Century"? And the portrait!

If only men did n't die just as they are getting ripe and great! Death *is n't* a gentle

angel. The old view is the true view. No flowers can hide the skull. It is not only awful — it is horrible that people should die. No — don't print that poem of mine, "The Morning Thought" — not now.

Do you happen to know whatever has become of C——? I have an old interest in him, and wish he might be what he was meant to be by his over-sanguine maker.

Somehow I pity everybody lately. Do you know anybody one could — envy, — say — for a change?

Silence is *not* golden, but leaden — or earthen. Argal, write!

Yrs. E. R. S.

TO E. B.

[CUYAHOGA FALLS, OHIO,]
May 12, 1884.

DEAR MISS B. — You recollect old Geo. Herbert after a season of dumps congratulates himself that once more he doth "relish versing" — So there are faint symptoms that now that the apple-trees are at last in blossom I may relish writing to my friends. Alack, I have not so many to whom I *ever* write, or from whom I am ever written to (I no longer teach the English language) that I need wait so long to write at least a brief scratch. Yet

you know one will delay a long time, thinking that by and by he will be *just* in the mood and tense. The truth is I desire to hear from you. Otherwise there are hardly enough apple-trees out to move me, even this May morning. Is it any wonder people talk about the weather? For what is there that plays the deuce with us like that. I confess I am completely under it half the time — and more than half under, the balance. Rejoice, O young woman, in thy Berkeley! Why don't you come on and visit Connecticut? and stop here on the way! It 's very pretty now, I assure you. Treacherous, a little, but full of greenery and blossoms. In New England no doubt it is still prettier. In the past week the sky — even in Ohio — has been summer blue. You remember what that is, between big round pearly white clouds? But for six months previously it was a dome of lead, or dirty white. Now and then, of a rare day, the color of a black and blue spot on a boy's knee. Once or twice in a month, when the sun tried to shine, the hue of very poor skim milk. The gods economizing, no doubt, and taking that mild drink in place of nectar — or slopping it around feeding their cats — or the Skye terriers. If I recollect aright you have midsummer in May, there. Hot forenoons and bootiful fog in the evening?

I would like to help you dig your garden. We have now apple, pear, and cherry trees in blossom, yellow currant, white and purple lilacs, flowering cherry: pansies, tulips, lily of the valley, and genuine solid green turf sprinkled with gold buttons of dandelions. The air is full of fragrance. The robins, bluebirds, wrens, and orioles are building wonderful nests all over the place. Three red and black game bantams are parading on the lawn, and seven baby bantams about as big as the end of my thumb are skittering around under the laylocs.

Are you all well, and good as ever? My love to all of both your houses. Don't wait long before writing.

Yours, E. R. Sill.

TO M. W. S.

Cuy. Falls, August 16, 1884.
Saturday.

I sent you yesterday a pretty long screed about Emerson, telling you to use the whole of it, or part of it, or very little of it, or none at all of it. I should be equally well suited either way.

I don't think other people feel the way I do about that. When a thing is written they have a trembling hope, at least, that it is good, and anyhow wish to have it used. But you should

see the equanimity with which I write thing after thing — both prose and verse — and stow them away, never sending them anywhere, or thinking of printing any book of them, at present, if ever. Sometimes I do think I will leave a lot of stuff for some one to pick out a posthumous volume from — but more and more my sober judgment tells me that other people have seen or will see all that I have, and will state it better.

It is very strange, though, the difference between my positiveness of judgment as to other people's writings, and my lack of any power to judge at all of my own. It would perhaps be an interesting psychological study for you if I could make you see my mind about this. I judge swiftly and positively of literature in general. For one thing, the consciousness has more and more been ground into me that my whole point of view is hopelessly different from that of people in general — I mean educated and intelligent people. Nor do I have the compensation of feeling this difference a superiority. I should have made an excellent citizen of some other planet, may be, and they got me on the wrong one.

I don't feel the least fitness for a writer. When anything of mine is to be printed I have often a horrid sense — now the fingers of the

whole universe will be pointing at this fellow as an example of a wretch that has mistaken his vocation. When it is once printed, I feel instantly relieved, in the knowledge that nobody reads things — after all — or cares whether they are good or not. The fingers I perceive to be all pointing at more conspicuous objects, or being harmlessly sucked in the mouth : so I don't care a bit — till the *next* thing is about to be printed. The " Century " has had some time a sonnet of mine. You would not believe how I have actually shuddered internally each month with fear that *now* I am going to be stuck up on a post without a rag on me at last, and my nightmare was to come true.

I don't believe I ever shall write a thing that is really good. Yet, with it all, I have unbounded conceit of my own *judgment* about the things I feel I *see* clearly.

Queer, queer fellows we all are. Must be fun for the bigger fellows that hide in the clouds and watch us.

Yours — and I 'd like to hear how you are.

E. R. S.

TO ——

C. F., November 1. Monday.

The trouble about signing one's name to poems is, that stupid people (and we are all

pretty stupid sometimes) persist in thinking every word literally autobiographical. I have had enough annoyance from that to sicken any one of ever writing verse again, or anything else but arithmetics and geographies. Even then somebody would hate you for your view of the Indian Ocean, or fear the worst about your character because of your treatment of the Least Common Multiple. People are getting to write anonymously now and then. (You did n't write "The Breadwinners," did you? Perhaps the Janitor at the University did — or Bacon the printer, or Hy. Ward Beecher.)

As to French poetry, I know there 's another side. I believe as I used to, about the mass of French writers. It 's only here and there a Geo. Sand, or a delicate poet. As to German — Heine was a Jew of the Jews. You might as well instance Job as a German. A friend of mine calls certain graceful verse "unsubstantial." It 's true much of the French is so.

Your test is the best one: what sticks in the mind. Or as some one puts it, as a test of great writers, whose work has most entered into the world's intellectual life?

Yours, E. R. S.

TO H. H.

Cuy. Falls, January 23, 1885.

Dear Henry, — Yours of 21st rec'd. Thank you for answer to my question.

As to whether I would accept a certain offer, if made: — there would be two very serious obstacles. First, that I am not the man, in several important respects, to fill the place well. I know the sort of man it requires, and that I am not the one. Second, that I could not leave here at present. My plain duty is right here, and it would never do to run away from it.

Very good of you to think of such a thing. But a man for that place should be picked out by his enemies, not his friends. There is a great opportunity there.

As ever, yours.

TO THE SAME

Neither ought I to give you the impression that the religious question is my only reason for not encouraging any effort to have me selected at Yale for that vacant chair. There are reasons arising from my own personal disabilities, into which it is no use to go. . . . Again, I should be sorry if I had made you suppose that I am one of those bull-headed

enthusiasts who wishes to foist his own hobby into every company. I remember one of my students, since graduating, giving me warm praise for the delicacy I had seemed to show in respecting the religious points of view of my classes, always.

But, on the other hand, you cannot, of course, realize (till you have come to teach the subject) how all our best literature in this century — and a good deal of it in the last century — dips continually into this underlying stream of philosophical thought, and ethical feeling. "In Memoriam," for example, is one of the poems I read with my Senior classes. You may discuss its rhythms, its epithets, its metaphors, its felicities and infelicities as Art, — you are still on the surface of it. The fact is that a thinking man put a good lot of his views of things in general into it — and those views and his feelings about them are precisely the "literature" there is in the thing. And the study of it, as literature, should transfer these views and feelings straight and clear to the brain of the student. So of "Middlemarch," or "Romola," or Hume's Essays, or "Faust," or "Manfred," or Renan's "Souvenirs de l'enfance."

The more you think of it the more you will come to see that the moment you drive the

study of literature away from the virile *thought* of modern men and women, you drive it into the puerilities of word-study, and mousing about " end-stopt lines " and all that.

I hope we old friends, if we must get fewer, will at least come to understand each other better and better. That is one pleasure that remains after youth, and indeed increases the longer we live, I believe.

Most truly yours.

TO C. T. H. P.

December 21, 1885.

That peculiarity of which I spoke to you — of my forgetting what I have written on a given occasion — will play me some bad trick some day, I expect. It has been my case, always, that a thing once written is dismissed from my mind with a kind of cold dislike. I never liked my children, so to speak. It has happened several times that I have been accused of writing a certain verse or line, and I have denied it — and found I had after all, and printed it, too. It comes, I should n't wonder if, from a kind of self-love, or egotistic pride — mingled with a *perception* of high things beyond the power to accomplish them. I hate every bit of verse I write, as soon as it is printed, and would gladly never see it again. I do not

forget other people's writings in this way — tho' I have by no means a *good* memory for literature in general; but it 's not so disgracefully bad a one. (I expect to get caught in some unconscious "plagiarism" some day; for I do sometimes read things rapidly and forget them. I only wonder that writers are not caught every day of their lives that way.) I have strong impulses to write, as in the case of letters; but immediately a thing is mailed, I fall to thinking — "What the devil was the use of writing that!" and then sometimes to thinking — "I wonder if I have n't said all that once or twice before!"

When a man sits down in the same old chair, and summons before his mind's eye the same old set of faces and circumstances and recollections, why does he *not* write, to any friend, the same old letter over and over again? I wonder if we all do!

Yours, E. R. Sill.

TO THE SAME

January 1, 1887.

I don't like the years to go so. I was not half done with '86.

I read this in Turgénieff's "Raufbold" last night: —

"Er hatte viel gelesen; und so bildete er

sich ein er besitze Erfahrung und Klugheit ; er legte nicht den leisesten Zweifel dass alle seine Voraussetzungen richtig seien ; er ahnte nicht dass das Leben unendlich mannigfaltig ist, und sich niemals wiederholt."

So, to live is more than to read, and one might *know* all things and miss of everything. And so, if life is endlessly manifold, we may hope for good and great things, here or hereafter.

Nature

OUR TAME HUMMINGBIRDS

HY is it that everybody is interested in birds? You may sit on a fence in the fields, or on a fallen tree-trunk in the forest, and find all nature "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable," till some bit of a bird lights near you. Instantly the scene is animated. You watch him plume his wing, or flit about with one bright eye on you, and you see nothing else as long as he is there. Is it one chief element of the interest he excites that you never know what he will do next?

It is a curious fact, too, that our interest in the feathered creatures is in inverse ratio to their size. Except, perhaps, in the case of the peacock, which belongs to the guild of æsthetes, and enjoys an ephemeral eminence on that account, we do not seem to care much for big birds. Nobody keeps a pet ostrich. The American eagle is not found in a tame state except in oratory. Even the dodo is only interesting because extinct. Nobody is so weak

as to feel flattered by the confidence of a goose or a parrot. But it really seems an attention when a chipping-bird lingers near us. And we are very proud that the chattering wren slips in and out of its box in our presence, just as if we were a mere tree.

Somebody explains our fondness for birds by their being so perpetually happy; and instances our interest in seeing children play about us as a case of the same kind. But I think there must be some deeper cause. There are more subtle sympathies between us than through happiness merely. The birds, for that matter, are *not* always happy. Some of them sing a minor strain. We cannot understand the words always (my wife says the catbirds sing in French), but the tone certainly sometimes has tears in it: unshed tears, — for I think the birds never cry, — but the sadder for that. Of course I understand that the sadness is often only of our bringing; and that we find the song sad just *because* it is so glad. As Burns hath it: —

> "Thou 'lt break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
> That sings upon the bough;
> Thou minds me o' the happy days
> When my fause luve was true.
>
> "Thou 'lt break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
> That sings beside thy mate;

For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
An' wist na o' my fate."

But sometimes the sadness is in the song itself. I have heard genuine threnodies when the bird's mate has been slain. Our interest in children comes from the fact, rather, that we ourselves were children, not long ago. And I incline to think it may be so with regard to the birds. It is possible that after coming up the line of evolution through fishes, reptiles, and birds, we skipped the lower mammals, and came at once to Man. The birds, in this way, are a reminiscence to us. That is where *we* were, last. *Pars quorum fui*, we feel, as we watch their social and domestic life. Does not every child try to fly? And do we not depict the angels with feathered wings — as the little girl said, "with fedders like a hen"? Not only does the play of birds seem very human and childlike to us, — their chasing each other about for pure fun, their frolicking at the bathtub instead of settling down to the serious business of the hour, their sham fights, their gymnastics, their playing tag till dark, their sense of humor as shown in various pranks, — like the blue jay's plugging pebbles into the acornholes "to fool the woodpeckers" (as a genial scientist suggests); but their habits of work, too, are much more like our human lot than

those of other animals. There is no house-builder and housekeeper, short of the *genus homo*, like a bird. And no mothers do so much for their babies, in feeding them or fighting for them, as human and bird mothers do. In no other walk of life, either, will the male parent take the place of the female, when she is gone, with such solicitude and perfect care for the offspring. Indeed, the human male only humbly imitates the feathered one here, and at a considerable distance.

The hummingbird, among all the feathered creation, seems a creature by itself. One may easily live a lifetime, even in our latitude, where they are common enough, nesting and rearing their young here, and staying with us the whole summer, without ever making close acquaintance with this least of birds. I even saw, not long ago, and in a scientific journal of repute, the assertion made confidently — as if it were one of the facts that every schoolboy knows — that the hummingbird has no song! One might as well assert that the canary or the nightingale has no song — or the hen. Brilliant and conspicuous as are its colors, and close as it constantly comes to human beings in sharing with them their intimacies with the garden flowers, its restlessness and swiftness of flight enable it to elude all ordinary observation. Its

wings, indeed, might be said to be actually invisible. They vanish from sight and fade into thin air, except when the bird is at rest; and it is almost never at rest. And who ever saw the feet of a hummingbird? It does not seem an earth inhabitant at all. It flashes down upon a flower-bed, like a mere reflection of light thrown by a restless mirror, and flashes off again. It is a sprite, an elfin of the elements. Few persons ever find its nest or see its eggs or young. People do not see it at work or at play, or engaged in any of the ordinary business of human or bird life. It dashes on the scene and away, and has done nothing but dip a rapid bill into a flower-cup or two. It is the shooting star of the garden firmament. It has no known orbits, and the most conspicuous thing it ever does is to vanish.

Accordingly, it was not so much because of its beauty, in its burnished mail of golden green, or its elfin symmetry and loveliness of tiny outlines, as because of this spritelike, unapproachable character, that I always had longed to have a tame hummingbird. This coy, evanescent, ethereal sprite, owning no kinship with ordinary things of earth, — this glint of animated sunshine, this star gleam, this fleck of flying rainbow, — I wanted to call him *mine;* to have personal relations with him; to wink

at him and have him respond as one who perceives the point; to have him perch on my finger, and perhaps — after a long time and after infinite proofs of reliable friendship on my part — to have him permit me very lightly to stroke those wonderful metallic feathers adown his little iridescent breast.

Moreover, they are so small. I wanted to possess — to have and to hold — this least bit of a wee speck of an intellectual being, — the tiniest mite of a body in which soul seems able to lodge securely, — real soul, by the test of being capable of mutual communication with the soul of man. I never wanted one to cage it up, as people sometimes cruelly do, and see it beat its poor little life out against the bars; but to take one young, and tame it, and make friends with it as one does with a horse, or a dog, — that would be different.

So when, one June morning, I discovered the nest on the limb of the old apple-tree by the greenhouse, and had got the step-ladder and clambered up quietly, and set eyes on the two little white sugar-plums of eggs, I instantly perceived the possibilities they contained, and nodded knowingly to them, as who should say, "At last I have you!"

The nest was about as large externally as the half of an average-sized hen's egg — a little

soft, cottony cup of downy texture, glued together with what the books declare to be the bird's saliva, but what seems more like cobweb, gathered and used while fresh and glutinous. All the outside was shingled over with irregular bits of lichen. It was built on a smooth apple-tree bough less than half an inch in diameter; the bottom set firmly down over the bough, and the line of lichen-bits running all the way round underneath, apparently with the mere purpose of making it all seem a part of the tree. The result was, at any rate, that the nest looked like only a little gray knot, which no one in the world would have noticed, unless specially searching for it. In the small, soft interior lay the two eggs, each about three eighths of an inch long, cylindrical, with rounded ends, instead of ovate like ordinary eggs, and quite like two little clumsy mites of sugar-plums. The bough on which rested this tiny flower-cup of a nest hung some ten feet from the ground, and directly over a frequented garden walk: a singular choice of position, but the builder no doubt trusted to the invisibility both of itself and its habitation. Round the trunk of the old apple-tree was a rustic bench, where my wife and I passed many an hour, watching our fairy and her lichen-thatched home. For the first day or two of

our observation, the little body was rather impatient of our close proximity; and we used to drop our voices to a whisper, and keep our posture of the moment unmoved, however inconvenient this might happen to be, when we heard the low humming that announced her approach. She would fly nearly to the nest, then suddenly stop and hold herself poised in the air, putting her head on one side, and fixing one bright little black eye on us; then she would dart down and inspect us more closely. Apparently detecting by some subtle sixth sense our friendly intentions, she would flash back to the nest, pause an instant above it, then drop suddenly and softly in, leaving nothing visible but a bit of tail slanted up at one side, and the rigid little bill, elevated at an angle of forty-five degrees, at the other.

Such inefficient setting one never saw. The longest time I ever knew her to stay on the nest, in the daytime, was fifteen minutes. Oftener it was but three or four. After such a terribly wearisome and monotonous stay as this, she would be off like a bullet across the garden, or in through the upper windows of the greenhouse. In good bright weather she would be away from five to fifteen minutes, leaving the sunshine to brood her twin treasures.

For my own part, I gave up all hopes that such shiftless conduct would ever hatch out anything. It looked like the merest playing at sitting, as children play with dolls and doll cradles. All day long she would be off and on in this way, sometimes remaining but thirty seconds on the nest. Of course nothing could ever come of it. But my wife had more confidence in the maternal instinct, even the minute thimbleful of it for which there was room in that small bird-breast. Depend upon it (she would say), the little creature knows what she is about.

In fact, she did. One morning, on making my regular excursion to the top of the step-ladder, I saw that a miraculous transformation had taken place; a metamorphosis as wonderful as any that Ovid sang. The white sugar-plums had turned into two ugly little dark bugs, soft, sparsely thatched with black fuzz, eyes unopened, tailless, and with no other sign of a bill than a horny point on that end which one was, from this circumstance, led to suppose the head. Moreover, the minute black monsters were palpitating, in a lumpy sort of way, with life.

The mother-bird now became a little less inefficient. Indeed, she showed signs of excitement; darting about, perhaps, a thought more

nervously and swiftly, always lighting on some twig close by the nest, or upon its edge, instead of stopping to plume her feathers at some distant point in her apple-tree. She developed now, too, a ferocity toward other birds that kept the immediate neighborhood of the nest free of all such feathered tramps and brigands. Not a robin or catbird, especially, could approach that side of the tree without encountering a meteoric descent upon him, and a sharp little war-cry. Nor could we go up the steps and peep into the nest, at first, without hearing a high-keyed humming about our ears, and finding a threatening bill angrily aimed at our faces.

But, now that my birds were in the bush, how was I to have them actually in the hand, as tamed and domestic fowls? If I waited till they were fledged, they would be off, and leave me only the empty nest. If I took them before they were fledged and weaned, they would infallibly die on my hands; for how could I, a big, blundering, featherless mammal, hope to take any effectual care of two such delicate sprites? Plainly there was but one way to succeed: the mother-bird must somehow be employed to nurse them for me. But if I were to cage her, as I could now easily have done, so much accustomed to our presence had she

become, the result would be what it always is when people try to cage grown hummingbirds: she would straightway die, and leave her babies to starve. No, the mother must be free, and the young ones caged. That was the problem.

So I set about caging the nest and young ones. Taking a hemispherical wire-gauze dish-cover, which I purloined from the pantry, I fixed a wire-gauze bottom to it, in such a way that I could at first leave it open, and shut it day by day, by degrees. After hanging this in the tree near the nest for a couple of days, to become a familiar sight, I hung it, bottom-side upward, up around the nest. Then, little by little, I closed the door, till the mother could reach her charges only through a round hole just over the nest. All this she accepted so quietly, and learned so readily to use, that (noticing some fluttering motions in the baby sprites, and knowing they would soon be following their mother through the hole in their roof, I now substituted a roomy cage, some two and a half feet long, made of wire gauze, with a sliding wooden bottom, in which, gradually as before, I inclosed the nest from below. The mother-bird accepted this also as some harmless new freak of the great, homely animal that had so long been bothering about her premises, — something for which he was prob-

ably not to blame, and which it was her duty not to make a fuss about. She quickly learned to go in through the two-inch aperture that I had left in the sliding roof; but she had difficulty in finding her way out. Did it need all the stimulus of seeing the little ones below to bring her whole microscopic mind to bear on the question? At all events, such was the case. *Facilis descensus Averni;* but in order to her emerging again it became necessary for me to stand an intermittent guard over my contrivance, all day long, pulling the string to let her out, then shutting the cage after her (all but her necessary doorway for entrance again), since the young ones now began to take short trial flights within the cage.

And now came a tragical chapter of the story. The poor little mother flew in, one morning very early, before any one was on guard to let her out. Finding no outlet, and imagining, perhaps, that her babies would go hungry too long, or, it may be, frightened by some outside bird that had glared in on them, she had apparently flown round and round the cage till exhausted; for I found her, when I paid my customary visit to the tree, lying dead in a corner, as if heartbroken with hope deferred. Most cordially then I wished that I had left the wee birdies alone; and I made

bitter reflections — bitter with the bitterness of being too late, as reflections on our sins are apt to be — about the invariable evils of man's interference with nature. "Bring back" (I said, taking myself metaphorically by the ear), — "bring back, if you can, that bright little life you have wantonly destroyed."

But the orphans were now fairly on my hands, and it was the time for action, not for useless remorse. Do you ask, Where was the other parent? Alas, there was none. Either the male had been killed — caught by a cat, perhaps, for that does sometimes happen (and is a wonderful instance of the instantaneous correlation of mind and muscle on the part of the cat tribe), or else he was a very bad father indeed. For the only sign of a male bird I ever saw about the nest was one morning when a male darted up to the cage with his fiery throat flashing, shot a fierce glance in at the young ones, then vanished for good.

I accepted the situation, took the infants in charge, and did nothing else for a week, to speak of, but feed them with syrup and watch their development. It was the third of July when the mother-bird died, and my Independence Day was devoted to dipping one finger into loaf-sugar-and-water, every fifteen minutes, and holding the drop to my birds to sip.

It was now my wife's turn to show a lack of faith — naturally, since it was this time faith in her husband that was required, not faith in nature. It was preposterous, she said, to suppose that I could raise them on nothing but sugar-and-water; for did not all the latest ornithological treatises say that hummingbirds feed mainly on insects, seeking flowers for this animal food, and not for honey? And did not Every Schoolboy know that nitrogenous food was necessary for the growth of tissue and the support of animal life?

Nevertheless, I persevered, and so did the birds. Daily their down developed into wonderful feathers, and daily their flights about the roomy cage were stronger and longer, and their pulls deeper at the cup of sugar-and-water. The result is (I may as well say now) that here are the two small gnomes, at this very hour, — a month and a half after I undertook their weaning, — flying about the room, lighting indifferently on my hair, my ink bottle, or my penholder, living refutations of the food theories of the ornithologist and his celebrated fellow pundit, Every Schoolboy. Where they get their nitrogen I cannot say; but what they feed on is plain sugar-and-water; and they seem to have made a wonderful deal of blood, bone, and preternaturally active nerve and

muscular tissue out of it. It is not their fault — they have never been taught their letters. If they had read the standard scientific works on the subject, they would doubtless have done their best to regulate their digestion and assimilation more in accordance therewith.

For the first two weeks of their orphanage I am certain they had no other nourishment but the syrup, for they only fed as I offered this to them, on my finger, or on a flower which I sometimes would dip in it, to give it, if possible, some tang of the natural garden flavor. Of late I have occasionally fed to them, in the way of confectionery, newly hatched spiders, suspended on a thread of cobweb. It is not so easy for them to take an insect. Their natural method of doing so, I am convinced, is by flying at them with bill wide open (some three-quarters of an inch, at the tip), and so literally "putting themselves outside" of their prey. They seem incapable of seizing an insect by the bill point and working it backward into the gullet. Their tongue is a softish, flexible double tube, very perfectly adapted for sucking honey-dew from the flower-tubes, but (it appears to me) not at all adapted to work morsels backward the whole length of the bill. For this reason I doubt the statement of the books that their object in thrusting the bill into

flowers is to capture insects, rather than honey-dew. At least, I am certain that my two bantlings never take an insect except by thrusting the mouth, open far back, forward around it. Nor did I ever see any signs of the mother's catching an insect to feed her young. Her method of feeding was to join bills with one of them for some fifteen seconds at a time, evidently feeding it bird-*pap*, or food already partially digested for them. I might add, as to this point, that I never could detect a hummingbird in the act of opening its bill in a flower, in any such way as to be able to take in an insect. The action of the bill and head, on the contrary, seems precisely that of my pets when sipping syrup from their cup. Yet they are fond of little spiders, and such small deer, and no doubt capture many of them while on the wing.

Through the warm weeks of July, I kept the cage still in the tree where the babes were born, lowering it by a cord and pulley to feed them, and hoisting it again to sway among the dancing apple leaves. When the nights became cool, they were carried into the greenhouse to sleep, staying out through the day. But now that autumn weather has set in, with frequent clouds, and thinner sunshine, they live altogether with their foster parents in the

house, where they are carried from room to room to follow the sun, for the sunshine is their life. Nothing ever so impressed me with the absolute dependence of all living things on the great source of light, heat, electricity, and of whatever as yet unknown forces are intermingled in the mysterious movements of vitality, as the sight of the hummingbirds and their relations to the sun. When a sudden thick cloud obscures the warm beams, they feel the change instantly. In ten seconds their vivacity has vanished. They become quiet, the wings droop a little, the sparkle of the eye is dulled, the feathers are puffed up. When the sun breaks out again, it is as if the ray struck them off the perch into mid-flight, kindling all their vivid intensity of life at once. Decidedly, the sun-worshipers of old had some reason on their side.

Every day they have an hour or two of free flight about the rooms, and this is their great play spell. School is out, and they chase each other with all manner of pretty antics from one extemporized perch to another. One of their favorite resting-places is the window-seat, where they hover about the glass, — recognizing it for glass as well as any grown folks, and never bumping against it, to hurt themselves, — gazing out upon the great world, and sometimes

catching a minute fly. This capture, however, seems to be more for fun than food; for no matter how few or how many they find, every ten minutes or so they buzz back to the cage, drop dexterously through the small scuttle-hole in its roof, and seek their syrup-cup for luncheon.

Of course the babes were christened while still very young. The male is yclept Peasblossom; the female, Cobweb. It will suggest itself as an obvious objection that the Midsummer Night's "Cobweb" was addressed as "Master," not "Miss." And again as "Monsieur," as where the transmogrified weaver exclaims: —

"Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, monsieur; and, good monsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would be loath to have you overflown with the honey-bag, seignior." But it may well be doubted whether the speaker was in a state of mind favorable to accurate observation, or whether the respective styles of dress of gentleman and lady fairies were familiar to him. And then, too, he was only a donkey, after all.

Cobweb has been true to the enterprising nature of her sex in twice getting away, while out of doors. On both occasions she made straight for their old home, the apple-tree. The first time, I climbed up into the tree, gently put my hand over her, and brought her back, unresisting, but not without some squeaks of protest. The second time, she returned of her own accord, after a few minutes' flight, induced thereto partly by a frightful catbird, who made up faces at her and called her names, and from whose harsh voice she fled home squeaking with fear.

Every morning they enjoy a dainty bath in a shallow sea-shell. It is no noisy splash, such as big, clumsy canaries or chipping-birds make; but floating softly an instant over the water, half supported by its surface and half in the air, they drop their little folded feet delicately in till they touch the pearly bottom; then for a second the wing-tips and the tail just graze the water, and they are off again to the rim of the shell, perhaps to repeat the performance after a moment's fluttering, and dressing of their elfin plumage.

Their most comical aspect is at night when asleep. As soon as it begins to grow dusk, they perch close together on an ivory knitting needle in an upper corner of the cage, which is

their favorite bedchamber, and sleep snuggled up to each other as tight as two kittens. On one occasion only they had a quarrel (*tantæne iræ in animis cœlestibus?*); and that night they went to sleep as far apart as they could possibly get, at the two ends of their perch. Of course it is out of the question for them to get their heads under their absurd little wings, so they content themselves with ruffling up their feathers till each bird is but a little fluffy ball, the size of a walnut, closing up their eyes as tight as possible, and slanting their rigid, needle-like bills upward at a steep angle. There they sit bunched up together till broad daylight. The lighting of the gas does not awaken them, but we can see sometimes that they are having dreams. Their small heads quiver slightly, and their bills vibrate, and my wife avers that the motions of Cobweb's bill indicate that she is dreaming of nestlings and of giving them food; but for this I will not vouch.

Peasblossom is by far the saucier of the two. If one holds out a finger to him when he is humming about the room, he will dart down and perch on it, swinging his head rhythmically from side to side, and seeming to inspect one curiously, as if with dim reminiscences of Bottom the weaver, and wonder where the "fair

large ears" and "amiable cheeks" are gone. Sometimes he will feel, or feign, sudden misgivings of you, and will ruffle his crest and flash his black eyes, as much as to say, "I 've a mind to tear you limb from limb, you big, unfeathered monster!"

For the most part the little creatures have very happy lives. They are safe from shrikes and cats and boys; nor do they suffer, so far as one can see, from any of those vague ancestral terrors that human beings know as superstitions and nightmare fears. They want but little here below — namely, their small glass cup occasionally replenished with sufficiently liquid and pellucid sugar-water; and from above they ask only sunshine. If, besides, they have a taste of midget or infant spider, that is clear gain, like candy to the schoolboy. Yet they have not been wholly without mishaps. Once they were left out too long in a suddenly falling temperature, and when I went for them, Cobweb lay apparently lifeless on the floor in a corner of the cage. I laid her softly on the palm of my hand, and she showed no signs of life except a scarcely perceptible breathing. But after five minutes of indoor sunshine, combined with the heat (and who knows if some more subtile stimulus, imparted from the human vitality) of my hand, her breath

came more quickly, her eyes opened, and she sipped a drop of syrup, and was immediately as wide awake as ever.

How they are to be kept warm and (what is more) sun-bathed in the long, dark winter of our euphemistically termed "temperate" zone, is a question of much interest in our household. My wife suggests a red flannel jacket for each bird. Something in the way of a pocket furnace, with a small electric light for daytimes, perhaps could be devised. In any kind of fairness we ought to migrate with them to Mexico. Very likely we ourselves should find such an annual flitting beneficial. Indeed, has not man made a mistake in supposing himself to be by nature a hibernating, instead of a migratory creature? Will not the coming man discover that, at any given season of the year, it is the best place for him where it is the best place for the hummingbird?

If we fail to keep them in our coming dark and cold weather, and they peak and pine and die, the old question will recur with a remorseful sting to it, — whether it is not always and intrinsically cruel to cage a wild bird. There are obviously two sides to it. One may contend, with at least some plausibility, that to cage a wild bird is only to introduce it to a higher plane of existence. Is not all civiliza-

tion a kind of caging process? We take the *sans culotte* and happy savage, button him into those "fetters of a falser life" — clothes, crib and confine his wayward freedom with rules of etiquette, rules of politeness, rules of morality, — artificial restrictions of all sorts. Whereas he was savage, now we call him civilized; but whereas he was free, is he not now caged? In the case of man, to speak honestly, we know very well that in reality we have enlarged his true liberty by this apparently restrictive process. We have really freed him from a thousand dangers, and slaveries to brute nature that belong to all barbarous existence, and given him as many new powers and possibilities. "And yet" — the mind still doubts; and in the summer vacations, when we dash away from civilized employments to the savage delights of slaying trout and deer and mosquitoes, the doubt rises to a kind of wild assertion that *freedom*, after all, is the best thing, even if we have to go to the woods to find it.

And so, even more surely, of the birds — those very incarnations of blithe, sweet liberty. Capture them, wise reader, only with the imagination. Enjoy my hummingbird, with me, as I sit here — one representative of a certain overgrown, conceited, bungling, wingless species of the animal kingdom — trying to under-

stand better my "world not realized" for the presence of these other two little vertebrates who sit with me; both put together not so big as my thumb; one of them pluming his emerald breast as he surmounts a crease of my coat-sleeve, the other perched on my ink-stand, trying to look wise, yet too obviously thinking only of "victuals and drink." But if you are indeed what the old-fashioned writers always appealed to — my "gentle" reader — do not follow my rash example. Let the birds go free. Do with them as Goethe said we do with the stars — "admire them, love them, but not desire them for our own."

For I must needs, to be wholly truthful, add here a tragic postscript. The dark fall days came; there was a whole week without a gleam of good sunshine; and in spite of all our contrivances and our cares, the two bright and beautiful little lives slipped out of their cage and fled away.

A RHAPSODY OF CLOUDS

"O ETHER divine!" cried Prometheus; but *he* was chained supine on the rock, and forced to see the sky. We who walk erect at will are apt to confine our attention to the things of earth. There are two landscapes, two firmaments, always visible to us; but it is as if, by some secret compact, the upper and finer one were reserved apart for birds and poets, or for the forlorn face that here and there turns upward in search of some better justice or fairer hope than has been found on earth. Now and then we find a person who has the habit of looking at the night skies, and mayhap knows the constellations, so that the stars are not accidental sparks to him any longer, but old friends, any one of whose faces would be missed if it were withdrawn. But who looks upward by day and sees the clouds?

There are ways of enticing people, or reminding ourselves, to appreciate this neglected side (the upper side) of landscape. It is no sin to improve upon Nature, or at least upon our physical endowments for apprehending her

beauty. The *camera obscura* is one such contrivance. Fix a suitable lens in the front of any old box, with a dark curtain under which to thrust the head, and the "divine ether," with its cloud-cuckoo-town of shifting scenery, will stoop to our infirmity, and mimic itself in little — but with all its glorious light and color — below our face. The Claude Lorraine glass is another simple instrument of magical effect. The great landscape that seemed too vast to look at, in its sweep of valley and woods and hills and sky, comes into the compass of the hand, with the lights and shades and hues all there, but mellowed and softened; it is beautiful as ever, but it all floats on the facet of a crystal; the big giant has eaten of Alice's cake in Wonderland, and becomes a heavenly child; the finite eye has captured the infinite distance by a pretty trick. The poet Gray, it is said, used always to carry a common lens in his pocket when he "walked abroad," in whose surface to see the landscape imaged; thus, we may suppose, to bring it nearer the compass of an elegy or an ode.

But this present screed was entered upon in order to recommend to all lovers of nature the use of still another bit of artifice for aiding the natural eye to see the supernatural beauties and wonders of sky-and-cloud scenery. I mean the

ordinary smoked glasses of the optician's shop. They should not be colored glasses at all, but just sufficiently clouded with a colorless smoke-tint to tone down the intensity of the brightest light. The test should be that one can gaze fixedly at a bright, sunlit white cloud floating in noonday blue, without trying the eye. I do not believe (though I am no optician) that the ordinary habitual use of such glasses is to be recommended, except where the eye imperatively demands protection. They are rather for special emergencies, such as a dusty wind-storm in the city, to keep the awning-posts and paving-blocks out of one's eyes; or on the snow slopes of a mountain, to blunt the intolerable glare; or in a railroad car, to fend off cinders blundering in through an open window; and especially for this æsthetical use of which I speak. One feels, on using them for the first time, that he never before has properly seen a cloud, for the reason that never before has he been able to look steadily right into the face and eyes of a brilliant noonday sky.

In this way, with the shield of the soft-toned glasses before the eyes, one no longer gives a general look at the heavens now and then, with a hasty glance, as to know whether it is necessary to take an umbrella, but he seats himself before it, as before the surf, or before a play

at the theatre, to watch deliberately what goes on. Nor does he any longer look at an individual cloud that is pointed out for some grotesque shape or some remarkable color; but he sees the whole field, the complex groupings of forms and tints, the marchings and countermarchings of the sky battalions. One might as well suppose he knew the wonders of forest scenery when he had only looked at single trees, as to imagine he had seen the clouds when he had only glanced hastily at an occasional cloud. There are wonderful mountains among them, with sheer precipices, and shadowy caves, and Alpine crags; dark towers, such as Childe Roland blew his blast before; minarets and domes, with mysterious arabesque of Oriental tracery; serene ocean shores where the gray sand glimmers through shoaling blue, and the round-breasted galleons sail smoothly over.

It is great to sit in a lawn-chair, of a summer Sunday afternoon, and gaze undazzled into the upper sky. A light breeze taps the pear-tree leaves softly, as a mother might pat together the palms of her child. The organ snores sleepily in the distant church: even the choir sounds musical, heard faintly and occasionally, as if it were a far-off memory of better music. The blue of the zenith is intense with light that

would be unbearable to the unshielded eye, and as the Cleopatra's barges of slow clouds sail softly across, with their round, bellying sails of snow and pearl, it only makes the azure more "deeply and darkly" blue. By and by the color, or the very depth and boundlessness of it, seems to inundate one's brain, as the blue, deep sea-tide lifts through a coral reef, and all the little ocean-creatures stretch out their delicate hands and feed confidingly in the lucid clearness. So do delicate brain-fancies float and feed tranquilly in this inflooding tide of the blue heavens.

Nor is all this without its possibility of solid scientific usefulness. O dear specialist, that inclinest to flout such skyey contemplations! *Why* do those clouds float there so buoyantly; and what makes the cirrus take on those feathery forms? Do not tell me it is the wind, unless I am to believe there be winds celestial, very different from winds terrestrial. Those filmy tufts, those lightest dabs, drawn out in wavy brush-lines, as if with a pencil dipped in sublimated wool, or in the quintessence of dissolved cobweb, — is it by electricity or magnetism? Or have some of those puffy-cheeked cherubs, seen so commonly tilting about the mediæval skies by the old masters, but not any more seen with the naked eye, — have some of

these bodiless baby-heads blown them at one another, for a game?

Even thou, O dear Gradgrindling, canst find thine account in this sky-gazing! It is even of "use," "practically." For there is no better barometer, or prophet of the weather, than such a film of cloud as one sees yonder. If it grows and grows, as we watch it (not that we can see it grow, — cloud prophets are too subtle for that; but if we see from moment to moment that it *has* grown), then we may know it will pretty surely rain. While if it fade and fade, and suddenly we find ourselves only remembering what was, — for it *is* not any more, — then we may pretty safely leave the unbrella at home.

Some days the outlines of the clouds are all making faces at each other: merry faces, if one feels in that mood, and therefore unconsciously compels the eye to that selection of forms; solemn faces, if that be the masterful feeling. Why should the profiles generally be looking from right to left? Or is that only an idiosyncrasy of my own? With me it is so on wall-paper, it is so in the cloud-tapestry of the sky; my mind, if for the moment idle, perpetually sees faces, nearly always profiles, and nearly always looking to the left. Is it because one sketches a profile on paper with the right

hand, and so with the projecting points toward the left, away from the hand, which otherwise would hide them? Some poet may say, if he chooses to, that it is with *all* the faces and aspects of this universe as with those of the clouds, — that all look smiling and benevolent to us, or grim and forbidding, according to our own voluntary state of heart; but I will not say it, for I am not perfectly sure it is true. The poet will probably say it if he only hopes it is true.

When presently we are able to sail the air in the coming balloon, it will be pleasant to make afternoon excursions among the summer clouds. We shall rendezvous here and there in their recesses. "Come!" one will say to his friend; "let us talk it over on the rosy south-west corner of that mother-of-pearl mountain in the sky." Or we shall bid John unpack the luncheon basket in the shade of yonder floating shelf of foamy ivory; or we shall agree to meet, at half past two, just under the billowy chin of what seems an aerial Martha Washington.

How can so soft and fluffy a texture, an airy pile of bird's breasts and gossamer, hold so firm an outline against the blue, and catch such a splendor of intense light? As it comes floating and toppling across the sky, one would like to shoot a feather-bed up through it, and let

the azure through the soft hole. Or one would like to see an angel out of "Paradise Lost," or, better, out of Dante's "Paradiso," push the yielding curtains of it aside, and for an awed and heart-beating moment look earnestly, half smiling, down upon the earth.

It is a dead enough world, if people merely glance at it with the rambling, unsteady eye of a preoccupied mind. Water, for example, — what is it but drinkable fluid, or oxygen and hydrogen, to the average mortal? The "primrose by the river's brim" and the river by its own brim are equally stale, flat, and unprofitable. But let a man look *close*, — say, at the tense muscle of the running stream, or the bubble-shadows on the sands in the eddy, each with a yellow star in its centre; then the water is a living wonder. And these clouds — an every-day affair, no doubt, a "useful trouble," to most apprehensions; but if we look *close* we cannot but take in the unimagined beauty of them. Changeful as the sea, over which they have sailed so many leagues that they have taken on a certain mimicry of the intricate forms of ocean-waves, they are without the quick, criss-cross fret and restlessness of the sea; for the clouds are nearly always calm: over its "restlessness," their "rest." Yet they are never still; the gossamer tracery, if you

watch it, is all alive, as if the films and veins of agate should come to life, and begin to weave and unweave their interchanging fibres.

There is another odd and interesting effect of the dark glasses. When one takes them off, after a prolonged gaze through them, the whole world gains suddenly a new splendor. It is like a *sforzando* chord in a symphony of Rubinstein's. Or it is like a sudden bracing up of the spirit when one concludes to fling off a dusky mood, and enters the sunshine of some hearty action.

It is not often that we can watch, near by, the rapid formation of cloud; but it once happened to me, in climbing among the "American Alps," — the Sierra Nevada, — to find myself on a crag precisely underneath the line of low cloud formation. Leaning back to rest against the rock, and looking upward, I saw the mountain drapery weaving itself — out of nothing, as it appeared: blue air on one side of the line; dark slaty films (nearest it), then shreds, then masses of flying cloud, on the other. Clear across the sky extended the distinct edge of this swift and incessant weaving. It was like nothing but a great shadowy banner streaming out in the gale from an invisible cord strained tight across the sky. It was the work of the Earth Spirit in Faust: —

"At the roaring loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the garment thou seest Him by."

Sometimes, with the eyes shielded by their smoke-tint armor against the blinding splendor of the summer blue contrasting with its dark cloud scenery, we may attend a thunder-storm symphony in the air. Solemnly the curtain begins to rise ; the wind carries it, for there is a wild wind far up in the heavens, though as yet all is still below. There is a deep hush upon us all, — the trees, and birds, and the rest of us in the audience, for we are full of expectancy. It grows insensibly darker and darker in "the hall of the firmament." There are rolls of distant thunder, — it is the orchestra, and the instruments are being tuned ; you hear the contra-basses trying a chromatic passage in hesitating touches. There is some trilogy of Wagner's toward ; for the stage is preparing, and the scenes are slowly shifting, — lofty walls of cloud that move silently to one side and the other ; but no celestial actors emerge, and the azure floor remains empty. Or possibly they are there, but invisible ; as most of the orchestral harmonies are still inaudible,

"Whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in," —

all but those louder and bolder double-basses,

and the rolling and rattling *crescendo* of the drums. By and by a flash of keen lightning blazes out, like the crash of brazen cymbals threaded with the shrilling piccolo.

At such times you may occasionally catch a strange effect. You are looking through a deep cleft in the black clouds, cut down across the sky, at the brilliant blue between. Suddenly a lightning flash completely reverses, for just an instant, the light and shade; the gloomy cloud-walls gleam out intensely luminous, while the towering shaft of intervening sky is dark by contrast, and so starts forward tangibly from the distance, like a momentary incarnation of some black *genie* of the Arabian Nights.

On some more tranquil August afternoon, when the sky-dome is lifted to its serenest height, and only pearly cirrus, so far up as almost to be motionless, bars it from being infinite, we may recline in our couch-chair and gaze upward so long and steadily that we drowse a little. Or, if still awake, we seem to lose ourselves in space. It is as if there were a second sort of sleep possible to us; not the withdrawal of the consciousness back into the inner brain, as in night slumber, but the expansion or floating out of the consciousness into the deeps of outer existence. Is it any wonder

if sometimes, then, the methodical reason gives way to flitting fancies, and, while the clouds flow slowly and smoothly across the upper world, our reveries run into rhythm, and such things get themselves written as this with which we close?

CLOUD TRACERY

What wind from what celestial wood hath sown
Such delicate seed as springs in air, and turns
The blue heaven-garden to a bed of ferns
In feathery cloud? They are not tossed, or blown

To such wild shapes, but motionless they ride,
Like a celestial frost-work on the pane
Of our sky-window, where the breath has lain
Of the pure cold upon the thither side.

They are but pencil touches, soft and light,
Traced faintly under some magnetic spell
By an entrancèd spirit, that would write

Hints of heaven-language ere the soul's release, —
Dim outlines of the syllables that tell
Of words like faith, and confidence, and peace.

CHEERFULNESS OF BIRDS

We are, at our house, I confess, a rather sombre family. There are no young children among us. The elderly people are silent by temperament, and grow more silent as age comes on. There is never any ill-temper in the house, — never any bickering or nagging, no spiteful epigrams or sidelong sarcasms. We seem really to like each other, although we are all "blood-relations." We get on, therefore, from year to year. No doubt we seem to others a happy family, and perhaps we are; but we are never a merry family. The house is so built that the rooms where the sun shines liberally are not the rooms most used; not the rooms, for example, that we are accustomed to use together. The heating apparatus is that most successful and most lugubrious one, — steam. The radiators are large black surfaces, with just enough of gilt at edge and corner to make the black hopelessly conspicuous, flattening themselves against the wall as if they were aware of their ugliness. No blazing and sparkling and cheerily snapping open fire

illuminates any of the "living" rooms. (The kitchen is the most cheerful place in the house, — as I have occasionally seen it, empty and deserted, after the cook and the maid had retired at night, — with the rich hot coals still sending out their rays merrily through chink and crevice of the range, for the sole benefit of the house-cat, stretched out with full abandon on the toasting-hot hearth.) Our deplorable habit, at meals, is to attend to the business in hand with grave decorum, — very decently and in order, no doubt, but for the most part silently. I have known some one of us, apparently for the moment sensible of something oppressive in this gravity, to venture on a frivolous remark, and to have it received in silence, as a thing not congruous with the roast meat, especially during the solemn action of its being carved and distributed. We come down to breakfast not at all out of humor (we are not invalids), but disposed to a very calm and peaceful demeanor. We wish each other good-morning with a genuine affection, but the remark, having been responded to, is not followed up. An observation concerning the weather does not usually lead anywhere. When we have a more lively visitor, we easily fall in with his mood, and are capable of a good deal of sprightliness on such an occasion,

— not in the least labored or affected, either; but by ourselves we are habitually silent, and occupied with our own sedate reflections.

All this makes — I cannot but see it and feel it, much as I myself share in the responsibility — a sombre house.

But there is one bright spot, and that furnishes the text of my utterances now upon the subject. It is the tame canary, "Johnny-quil." Not only is he himself always cheerful (and who ever saw a well canary depressed?), but he is the cause of cheerfulness in others. In the midst of one of our long silences we hear his little pipe ringing out from his sunny eyrie in the porch or the sitting-room, and some one remarks, "Just hear Johnny-quil!" Our barometers all go up ten degrees. Besides, everybody chirrups to him. It is not only, therefore, what he says to us, but what we say to him, that makes him the enlivener of the family. You can't exactly chirrup to a grown-up human being, — especially if he is carving a fowl, or reading a religious newspaper. But it is always possible, and apparently always inevitable, to say something chipper and chirpy to the bird, as we pass his cage. I have noticed this odd thing: that when Rhodora or Penelope or Cassandra stops at the cage, and says some little nonsensical thing to the small

yellow songster, or half whistles to him in passing, not only does he pipe up, but pretty soon you hear her own voice, from a distant room, humming a bit of some gay waltz or madrigal. The unconscious lifting of one's own more sober mood to the higher level of the bird's irrepressible good spirits lasts on a little beyond the instant. I recommend him and his merry kind to other silent houses. He is worth his weight in sunshine.

THE RED LEAVES ON THE SNOW

THE years monotonous? The same old seasons, and weathers, and aspects of nature? Never anything new to admire or wonder at? The monotony is in our eyesight, which goes on seeing nothing but the common and invariable things; simply because, from long familiarity, these are the easy things to see. But these are only the frame of the picture; the picture itself is never twice alike.

Suppose, to test it, we should open a ledger account with Nature. It should be headed, The Face of Nature in Account with an Exacting Mind. On the left-hand page should be entered the *Dr.* side of the account; namely, to all the phenomena of the year that we could fairly stigmatize as the "same everlasting old thing." On the right-hand page should go the *Cr.;* namely, by all the aspects of land or sea or sky that in any candor we must confess never before to have been noticed by us.

For example, "February 3d. *Dr.* To a pale sunrise, going into a low-spirited forenoon of leaden cloud. Have seen this hundreds of

times before." Or, "August 20th. *Dr.* To a hot afternoon. Sleepy. Palm-leaf fans. Shower at five o'clock. Bumbles and boombles of approaching thunder. Scalding water. One sharp flash and crack. Three rolling peals, going r, r, *r*, *bang;* r, r, *r*, *boong;* br, r, *bong*, BANG, br, r, m, m, m. Same old thundershower."

Of the *Cr.* side of the account, the items which led me to begin this paper, and which I am about to mention, will furnish a good example.

It is the 7th of November. The first snow came in the night, and this morning we had that annual experience of drawing the curtain, and looking out a little shiveringly, and saying, "A white world! Winter has come, sure enough." Ten inches of snow; and, all day, more powdered down in successive puffs and squalls. One minute, all blue sky, and the sun flashing on everything; the next, you see the northwest obscured, and the dun cloud rapidly covering the whole heavens, its upper edge fringed with light snow-scud brushed out before it in wisps and flying locks. Suddenly the air is thick with the falling and whirling flakes. It is like the glass toy box we had when children, which we turned upside down, and scattered a thick white shower on the

wooden trees and the whittled *chalet* and herdsmen.

. These gusty squalls have brought down the last "flying gold" of the autumn trees. Yesterday the maples and oaks and the great round-topped linden on the lawn were still full of their wealth of color. There it lies now on the snow, — smouldering reds and yellows, burning with dusky blushes on (not in, as ordinarily) the level floor of the white cold. This is what I meant I had not seen before: the autumn lying in this literal fashion on the winter's breast. Commonly the carpet of the fallen leaves is all down before the cold white feet of the snowstorms come to dance upon it. (If these metaphors seem to tread on each other's heels a little, a squall or two may be supposed to have intervened.)

The prettiest thing, however, in this particular case of the first snow, is the way its softness, early in the night, caused it to stick fast, silvering the windward side of every object. Not only are the firs deep loaded, the lower boughs weighted and banked till each tree is, from the ground up, a continuous tent of snow, but the trunks and every round limb and forking twig of the elms and oaks are puffed with fleckless white. It makes of them a vivid kind of crayon sketch: every bough has its dark

shadow away from the sun, and its white highlight toward the wind. The gate-posts are capped high with the rounded ermine. In the side of one of these snowcaps I carefully scooped out a little cave; then, removing my glove, I cautiously (so as not to dismantle the fluffy entrance) thrust in my bare hand and held it there. Almost instantly I could feel the warmth reflected from the translucent walls. For the first time (another item on the *Cr.* side of our account-book), I not only could understand, but *sense*, how the prairie-hens and overtaken travelers can, like cunning children with their mothers, escape the castigation of the snow by fleeing to the snow's own bosom.

The little wren-house on the stub of the dead pear-tree is piled thick to windward, and fringed with icicles on the eaves to leeward, like the abodes of all the rest of us. Across the river, on the crown of the slope, stands a straight high wall of woods. It is a reversed drawing in charcoal; all the tops, the soft mass of bare boughs and twigs, being shaded dark, while the stems of the tall hickories and oaks stand forth white as marble columns.

On the smooth snow of the lawn stands a slender upright wand, left solitary in the deserted tennis-court, where it supported the net in the middle. The adhering fleece has made

of it only a delicate rapier-blade of snow. Shining there in the sun, scarcely more tangible than its faint blue shadow, a slim white line, pure, cold, still, — what a beautiful bâton for conducting some symphony of Mendelssohn; or a stylus for tracing the icy music of ——'s poetry; or a gnomon for some frosty moon-dial, whereon to mark the saintly hours of ——'s life.

THE EARTH-SPIRIT'S VOICES

Sometimes it is difficult to keep from believing that the earth has voices, "mystic, wonderful," whose weird message continually tries to get itself delivered to our ear.

Every one has had the experience of standing in the midst of the woods, some still summer day, when the leaves and sprays hung motionless, and the silence was profound. Presently you are aware of a stir in the tree-tops. It is not so much an audible sound, at first, as an invisible movement, apprehended only by the most delicate tentacles of the sense of hearing. Then it rises to a soft murmur, and dies away. Again you hear it, farther off this time, but approaching. It is the Voice of the woods. But this is not all. I have fancied that beneath this murmurous surf-sound there lurks a still more mysterious undertone; as if there were other Voices, never daring to speak with each other except when the wind is blowing to mask their presence. With each other — or is it not rather that they are trying to communicate with our human spirit? As I

hear them, I imagine troops of little eager faces, pressing as near me as they dare, or as they are permitted, watching for the swelling of the wind, and hushing each other as it falls to silence.

But the message, if indeed there be one that the earth-spirit is thus trying to deliver, will hardly be conveyed by these delicate elves of the wood. They are too timid, too fearful of the quiet, and conditioned upon other sounds which mask but confuse their burden.

I think that the message will ultimately be conveyed by the Voices of the river. Their music, for one thing, is nearest that of human speech. I remember one night when we were camped by the McCloud River, deep in the heart of the redwood forest in northern California. There was no moon. Far above us the great plumy tops of the redwoods, own kin to the giant trees of the Sierras, rose like cathedral roof and towers, and hid the starlight. The aisles below were empty and silent, and mysterious with that soul of shadow that haunts the solitary woods at night. The aisles were silent, but not the choir. For, a stone's-throw to the right, the Voices of the clear, deep river were talking and laughing all night long. They were perfectly human tones. There would run on for a few moments an even, continuous

babble ; then out of it would rise a mingled peal of musical laughter, like bells, or clear pebbles striking together, or tinkling of ice, yet all the time human. Then there would run merry chucklings up and down the river ; and then a shout would arise, away down stream, and another ; and then all the hurrying Voices would talk loudly together ; and then a moment's quiet ; and then, again, inextinguishable laughter.

If I had lain there alone, perhaps I might have understood some fragment of this inarticulate music, or speech. But perhaps, too, I might have paid for it by never hearing mortal accents more ; so weirdly this tumult of elfin syllables wrought upon me, even well companioned as I was, there in the dimness and unearthly solitude of the starlit forest.

I never heard these Voices of the river again till one night they rose from the orchestra, in the Rhine Nymphs' song. I do not think Wagner understood them, any more than I ; he merely transcribed them from the river. It was strange to think that there they were, in uncomprehended echo, again appealing to mortal spirits across the barrier of the limited human intelligence.

At sea, also, I once heard this unavailing cry. It was a hundred miles, and more, from

the coast of Brazil. The night was clear starlight, the breeze light and steady, so that we were sailing silently. The stillness, indeed, was so unusual that we were all leaning at the weather rail, listening to it, and peering far off into the vanishing waste of waves. Suddenly a distant cry arose from the night; no one could say where, or how. Then it was twice repeated: not a human cry, that is certain; perhaps a sea-bird's, but not like that of any bird or beast I ever heard. If it expressed anything, it was not pain nor fear, but some intense, infinitely lonely desire.

It is no wonder the Greeks felt the earth to be a spirit. If we are not all pantheists, the wonder is that we are not all mythologists, at least. Sometimes it has seemed to me as these following lines endeavor to express: —

NATURE AND HER CHILD

As some poor child whose soul is windowless,
Having not hearing, speech, nor sight, sits lone
In her dark, silent life, till cometh one
With a most patient heart, who tries to guess

Some hidden way to help her helplessness;
And, yearning for that spirit shut in stone,
A crystal that has never seen the sun,
Smooths now the hair, and now the hand will press,

Or gives a key to touch, then letters raised,
Its symbol; then an apple, or a ring,
And again letters, — so, all blind and dumb,

We wait; the kindly smiles of summer come,
And soft winds touch our cheek, and thrushes sing;
The world-heart yearns, but we stand dull and dazed.

At another time the relation of the world to the human spirit has seemed to be more truthfully hinted at in lines like these: —

THE FOSTER-MOTHER

As some poor Indian woman
A captive child receives,
And warms it in her bosom,
And o'er its weeping grieves;

And comforts it with kisses,
And strives to understand
Its eager, lonely babble,
Fondling the little hand, —

So Earth, our foster-mother,
Yearns for us, with her great
Wild heart, and croons in murmurs
Low, inarticulate.

She knows we are white captives,
Her dusky race above,
But the deep, childless bosom
Throbs with its brooding love.

HUMAN NATURE IN CHICKENS

I AM convinced that one important way to acquire a profound knowledge of human nature is to study it in chickens. The difference between the mental characteristics of the two sexes, for example: the hen is very peaceable, chanticleer very irascible; the hen is an industrious scratcher, while chanticleer is naturally an idler, and thinks that if he crows and fights, that is enough; the hen takes care of the chicks all day, chanticleer only occasionally giving them a bug, and oftener a dig; the hen takes care of them all night also, chanticleer elbowing them off the perch to get the best place for himself; the hen, having seized another hen about the head, never lets go till the feathers come out, and never stops fighting till nearly dead, while chanticleer fights only for glory, and gives up long before he is hurt much; when they are fed, the hen attends strictly to business and gets all she can, while chanticleer will pick up a morsel, and wave it up and down with frantic eagerness to be seen of the hen, and values the flattery of having her take it from him more than the food.

These, so far, are well-known observations; but I wish to put on record one that is perhaps new, and, if new, important to the scientific world. It has been commonly supposed by evolutionists that the development of altruism and the benevolent sentiments in the lower animals reaches no farther than to the parental and sex points of view. But I have seen one of my roosters call his fellow and feed a bug to him. It may have been a bug that he did not specially want, himself, but this would only be a counterpart of much of our higher human benevolence. Does not most of our charity consist in giving away something for which we have no earthly use ourselves? (By the way, I have known this altruistic rooster to crow with great pride and pleasure when the object of his alms-giving had humbly swallowed the scratchy morsel.) I have seen a mother hen, also, when another brood of little chicks had got mixed up with her own for the moment, making a great pretense of pecking the aliens on the head, to teach them the difference between families in this world, but taking great pains not to hurt the fluffy little strangers. Furthermore, I have noticed that certain other hens, not mothers (but whether any who have never been mothers I have not yet observed), will peck all little chicks with self-restraint,

giving them as much salutary discipline as possible without bodily harm.

It may be said that these phenomena occur only among domestic animals, who have caught some morals and manners from their betters by contagion. But I think this is a subtlety, and that we may as well admit that the development of the moral sentiments begins farther back than we have been inclined to put it.

A NEW EARTH IN THE OLD EARTH'S ARMS

I HAVE made the discovery of new heavens and a new earth. Who has not felt the need of them? Who has not said to himself, "I have seen this whole thing over and over again. This world, which is 'round like an orange,' has, like an orange, now been effectually squeezed. Give me new worlds, not to conquer, but to live in." When the impulse to turn over a new leaf, to break with the past, to begin life all over again, is strong upon us, we look around in vain for "fresh woods and pastures new" in which to begin it. How put a new soul of existence into an old body of circumstances? But we are no longer driven to this dilemma. I do not mind making public, at least to all those choice spirits who read a Certain Magazine, the chart of my newly discovered world.

It is the world of the dawn. "Oh, *that!*" cries my young friend scornfully, and is about to turn away. But let me ask you, in confidence, When have you seen the dawn, the

whole of it, from silvery beginning to golden end? It was not long ago that an ingenuous maid asked me, looking up from her favorite poet, "*Is* the sunrise so much, any way?" No, I might have said; not if you burst in on it rudely, jumping out of bed, or sleepily fumbling aside a curtain. You only get, in that case, the flash of an angry glare. But go quietly at very daybreak, steal to some rock, or hill, or only to some housetop, and lie in wait for its delicate first footsteps in the eastern sky. You must stalk your sunrise.

How often do we hear somebody say, "I had to get up early this morning, and I wondered why we don't always do it"! But the chances are it was a very inadequate experience. There was some invalid to be tended, or some owl-train to be caught. Taken deliberately, and provided for beforehand by a full night's sleep, the wonder why we do not always do it would be vastly increased. Why we do not, however, is plain enough. It is because we cannot afford to burn our candle at both ends. "*Early to bed and* early to rise," the whole prescription reads. It does not do to take half of it alone. If we are to see the morning-star properly, the evening-star must draw on *our* night-cap with its own.

The dawn, then, is protected from the throng

of sacrilegious sight-seers by a great barrier. That barrier is the difficulty of going to bed. Our civilization has become a gaslight civilization. We try to turn night into day, and only succeed in turning night wrong side out; getting the harsh and wiry side that rasps the jaded nerves, in place of the gentle touches of "the welcome, the thrice prayed for" mantle of peaceful dreams.

It is diverting, to say the least, to take now and then a point of view outside of all our most cherished customs, even those that seem to us most "natural," because our patient natures have been so completely twisted into them, as the jar to the jar-bred Chinese dwarf. Casting such a glance from outside at our gaslight habits, we suddenly see something absurd in them. Standing in a crowded and brilliantly glaring room, half deafened by the horrid discord of a hundred jabbering tongues, we find it a relic of barbarism. We see the dancing rings of savages, yelling and beating tom-toms around a blazing fire. How much better off all these people would be, we think (supposing the din and confusion permit us to hear ourselves think), if they were all comfortably in bed, preparing their nervous machinery for a sane and energetic day to-morrow! For my part, I should be glad if I could go back

and cut away from my life all that ever occurred in it beyond early bedtime, as the cook goes round a pie-plate and shears off the outlying dough. Mere ragged and formless shreds of existence those gaslight hours have been, containing, on the whole, far more evil than good ; far more yawns, and the dreadful pangs of yawns suppressed, than refreshing eye-beams and voices.

Then there is another thing : could not the act of going to bed be made, from childhood up, a less depressing operation? The one daily torture of my own otherwise kindly handled childhood was the going to bed in the dark. I hated the dark, and have always hated it. Why could not some softly shaded light have been left for me to go to sleep by, and then withdrawn, instead of crashing down on my wide-awake eyes that horrible club of blackness? Or how much better to have "cuddled doon" in the still faintly glimmering twilight, and let the slowly coming starlight draw the child to sleepiness, and softly "kiss his eyelids down"!

And why must one assume a garb for the night that even the child feels to be ridiculously unsuitable? To take off one's warm and comfortably fitting garments, and barely cover the shrinking pudency of the limbs with

some brief apology of flapping inadequateness, — it is an insult to the Angel of Sleep. They do this better, I am told, in Japan. There the man has a night-suit of entire and comely garments. He does not unclothe and then half clothe himself, and sneak in mortified helplessness underneath a weight of vein-compressing sheets and blankets and uncomfortable "comfortables," squeezing him out as if he had covered himself with the cellar-door. He lies down in his complete warm suit, and throws over him some light affair of gossamer silk. It only needs a sudden cry of "fire" in the house to make us realize the preposterous condition we are every one of us in.

The time of Going to Bed ought in some way to be made the pleasantest, and most decorous, and most dignified, even — if you like — the most picturesque, and certainly the most comfortable hour of the whole twenty-four. Then it would need no polite euphemism of "retiring" to veil its horrors. Then the child would no longer hold back from it, as if he were being thrust into a hideous cave of darkness, to be seized by all the nightmares of Dreamdom.

And then, best of all, we should be ready to rise at the whistle of the first chirping bird, perfectly rested, thoroughly refreshed, with the

brain vocal only with light echoes of the wholesome day before, instead of still jangling with the cultured rumpus of a "social evening," or an "evening of amusement," or the uncanny, fevered visions which are only such evenings gone to seed. We should see the heavens at their purest, on earth peace, the big white stars at their best, unconfused by the haze of smaller stars and star-dust, and shining alone in the faintly illumined sky. We should know how our earth and its robe of ambient air appear to other planets, — a morning-star to the morning-stars. For the whole east, as it pales the planets in its growing light, is itself of pure and starry brightness. But if I am going to write of the dawn, I may as well do it in verse, and have done with it : —

AT EARLY MORN

Walk who will at deep of noon,
Or stroll fantastic in the moon ;
I would take the morning earth,
New as at creation's birth,
Air unbreathed, and grass untrod ;
Where I cross the dawn-lit sod,
Making green paths in the gray
Of the dew that 's brushed away.

Would some depth of holy night,
Sacred with its starry light,

Over all my breast might roll,
Bringing dawn unto my soul,
That its consecrated dew
Might refresh and make me new!
Then that thou and I might pace
Some far planet, poised in space,
Fresh as children innocent,
In each other's love content!
There our feet should recommence,
Lightened of experience,
Morning ways on dewy slope,
Winged with wonder and with hope;
All the things we 'd thought, or done,
Or felt before, forgot — save one!

Literature and Criticism

SHAKESPEARE'S PROSE

UT did Shakespeare write any prose? the ingenuous reader may inquire. Indeed he did, a good deal of it. We always think of him, to be sure, as a poet. In fact, hardly any other name in literature seems so far removed from any association with prose as this of the world's greatest dramatist. His plays, however, constantly show that he was a master not of verse only. "The Merry Wives of Windsor" is, with trifling exceptions, written in prose; so is nearly the whole of "Much Ado About Nothing." Not only in the lighter plays, but in the tragedies, also, a considerable amount of prose exists. For instance, about half of "Henry IV., Part I.," is prose, and about a quarter of "Hamlet." This feature of Shakespeare's writings has been generally overlooked. For many reasons it is well worth careful study. But first a preliminary word as to his verse.

Except for scattered bits of lyrical verse in

light rhyming measures, the metre of Shakespeare's dramas, wherever he employs metre, is what is commonly known as "blank verse." This, to speak technically, is iambic pentameter without rhyme. That is to say, each line consists of five feet, each foot being an iambus; that is, an accented syllable following an unaccented one. Any other metre might be used without rhyme, and be properly called blank (for example, "Hiawatha" is written in blank trochaic tetrameter, "Evangeline" in blank hexameter); but the blank iambic pentameter has proved so much more serviceable in English verse than any other, as to have appropriated to itself the name of "blank verse."

This measure, though it is so familiar to us at the present day, as the form in which we have read Shakespeare and Milton and Wordsworth and the "Idylls of the King" (as well as, unfortunately, much of the feeblest verse extant, since so many pens have a fearful facility in producing it), was an unpopular innovation in Shakespeare's early days. Until about the year 1590, when "Marlowe's mighty line" first resounded in "Tamberlaine," the drama (so far as it existed at all) was confined to prose or to rhymed measures. Blank verse had been introduced into England by Surrey's translation of the Æneid half a century before, and

Sackville had made the first experiment of its fitness for the drama in his tragedy of "Gorboduc," produced in 1561; but in his hands it was stiff and unwieldy. Marlowe's management of it was easier and more powerful; but Shakespeare was the first to develop the real capabilities of its majestic rhythm.

Not only was Shakespeare the first to use with complete success the much abused "blank iambics," but he was the first (and the last) to mingle with masterful skill his verse with prose. Ben Jonson, as well as Beaumont and Fletcher, wrote some of their dramas in verse and some in prose, and occasionally made use of both in the same play, but never mingled the two throughout, as did Shakespeare, with exquisitely perfect art. It is to this prose that the reader's attention is invited, with the special view of asking and making some suggestions toward answering the question, Why did Shakespeare use prose, in the passages where he did so, instead of verse?

We may be sure that the master poet did not write prose at certain times by accident, or because he was tired of rhythm, or because it was the easiest way. His choice was certainly in every case deliberate, or (what comes to the same thing) was based on an instinctive sense of certain underlying laws of expression. When

he wrote verse it was because prose, in that particular place, would not serve his turn; and when he changed from verse, as he so continually did, to prose, it was from his sense of a similar limitation in the capabilities of rhythm.

A complete answer to our inquiry, then, would at the same time go far toward answering the deeper question as to the respective possibilities of prose and verse as forms of human expression. Perhaps, indeed, there could be no better way of investigating that great problem of literary art than by searching for the principles which guided this master artist in his choice of these two forms of expression, both of which he used so perfectly, changing from one to the other as constantly and easily as the sea-bird from its home in the air to its home on the wave.

Let us look at the prose of "Hamlet," as being, perhaps (thanks especially to Mr. McCullough), as familiar as any to most readers, and as furnishing examples of all that is best in Shakespeare. The first departure from the blank verse occurs in Act II., Scene 2, where Polonius reads Hamlet's letters: —

Pol. [*Reads*] "To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia," — That 's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; *beautified* is a vile phrase: but you shall hear.

It is noteworthy that in Shakespeare letters

are thrown into the form of prose. The purpose seems to be to indicate that they are brought in from without. The natural speech of the dialogue being blank verse, anything which breaks in on it from outside must be either in some different metre or in prose. In certain cases, as in the play within the play, in "Hamlet," the former device is chosen; in the case of letters, the latter. In the play within the play, the effect of a more artificial form of verse with rhymes is to throw the action one step farther back, away from the actual life of the spectator. In letters, on the contrary, the effect of the prose, breaking in on the blank verse, is usually to bring before us the world of real life and affairs, if not outside of the play, at least outside of the present scene.[1]

Shortly after the reading of the letter (the dialogue, meanwhile, proceeding in verse), Hamlet enters, reading. Being "boarded" by Polonius, he at once begins answering him in prose, affecting madness, though with "method in it."

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away:

[1] For a notable instance of Shakespeare's power to shift the spectator's point of view and wholly change his atmosphere, see the essay of De Quincey upon "The Knocking at the Gate," in *Macbeth*.

I 'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*

O, give me leave.

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Ham. Well, God-a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord?

Ham. Excellent well; you 're a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

. . . . . .

Pol. . . . My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal — [*Aside*] except my life, except my life, except my life.

This scene is written in prose evidently for the reason that there is no earnest feeling in it. As for Polonius, he is "going about to recover the wind" of the prince; and Hamlet himself has "put an antic disposition on," as he warned his friends that he would sometimes do.

The essential function of poetry is to express feeling. A scene, then, which is only an intellectual sparring match between a would-be courtier and an assumed madman, could find no fitting expression in verse.

Moreover, verse is by its very structure or-

derly and regulated. Its rhythm consists in a constant subjection to a ruling law. Accordingly it is the natural expression for that feeling only which is under the control of reason. Madness of every form must necessarily break through its laws into irregular prose. Hence Hamlet, when speaking in his character of a madman, always uses prose. So does the really mad Ophelia, except when her utter lunacy goes beyond prose into incoherent snatches of fantastic song. So does King Lear when mad, except where the coherence and earnestness of his thoughts bring them for the moment into verse. So does Edgar, when affecting madness.

At the end of the scene quoted above, in the midst of his last reply to Polonius, Hamlet suddenly turns away and utters to himself his own sad thought, which clothes itself in rhythm (though the words are always printed in the form of prose), thus: —

"except my life, except my life, except my life."

Then enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. With them, too, Hamlet speaks in prose. He does not affect madness, as with Polonius, but he is suspicious of them, and so gives them none of his sincere thoughts, holding them at arm's length in his bantering prose. Midway

in the conversation, Hamlet betrays them into confessing that they were sent for by the King.

Ham. [*Aside.*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you. — If you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen moult no feather. I have of late (but wherefore I know not) lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you — this brave, o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire — why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me; no, nor woman, neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

This passage is always quoted as if it were one of Hamlet's sincere and earnest utterances. It would not have been spoken in prose if it were so. When he says "I have of late (but wherefore I know not) lost all my mirth," etc., he is by no means speaking from his heart. In reality, he knows very well "wherefore." These, remember, are the false friends of whom he

afterward says (speaking now sincerely in verse): —

> . . . "my two school-fellows,
> Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd."

He is putting them off their guard as spies by attributing his mood to such melancholy as any man might be liable to, when for the time he is "sick of life, love, all things," or when, in other words, he has an ordinary attack of "the blues." It is not such friends as these that he will suffer to look into his very soul, and so, in prose, he parries their advances.

His mockery of Polonius by the same test is only put on to serve his purpose. It is noticeable that he will not have him mocked by others, for he says to the players as they are going out together (and his words by their earnestness fall out of the prose in the midst of which they occur into metre): —

> "Follow that lord, and look you mock him not."

At the end of the scene Hamlet dismisses his two school-fellows, still in prose. As soon as they are gone, however, and he is once more alone, dropping the twofold mask of jesting madness (worn before Polonius) and causeless depression (before Rosencrantz and Guildenstern) he communes with his own heart in sorrowful verse: —

Ham. . . . My good friends, I 'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord!

Ham. Ay, so, God b' wi' ye. [*Exeunt Ros. and Guild.*

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What 's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? . . .
. . . The spirit that I have seen
May be the Devil: and the Devil hath power
T' assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps,
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me: I 'll have grounds
More relative than this: the play 's the thing
Wherein I 'll catch the conscience of the King. [*Exit.*

The last lines of the soliloquy are quoted to illustrate the habit of closing a passage of blank verse with rhyme. For this there is a good reason. It is because the rhythm of the verse finds some difficulty in stopping. Its very movement suggests continuance. Its stately flow, free from rhyme, can scarcely

come to a full close, any more than a wave, rolling in from ocean, could pause in full career. It must break in order to stop, either by a hemistich (or half-line), which is abrupt at the best, as if the wave shattered against a rock; or by a smooth rhyme, which is like the wave's slipping up the beach in spent ripples.

The next prose passage in "Hamlet" is the nunnery scene. It is just after the great soliloquy, "To be, or not to be," etc., which ends thus: —

Ham. Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action. — Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered.
Oph. Good my lord,
How does your honour this many a day?
Ham. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.
Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.
Ham. No, not I;
I never gave you aught.
Oph. My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed,
As made the things more rich; their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! Are you honest?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That, if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty. . . . I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me: for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me.

In this scene, whether because he suspects that the King and Queen are listening, or for some other reason, Hamlet rails at Ophelia in a coarse, hard fashion. He has on his mask of madness, and whatever comes through that must be spoken in prose. Observe, however, that his first utterances to her, being sincere, are rhythmical: —

> "The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
> Be all my sins remembered."

And

> "I humbly thank you; well, well, well."

This last is a complete pentameter line, provided we allow the pause between the last words, each to take one beat of the rhythm (a

device which is often to be found in Shakespeare. For instance, in the line quoted above, beginning, "For Hecuba!" the natural pause after the exclamation fills out the line). That is to say, wherever the real heart of Hamlet speaks to her, or of her (as in the scene at the grave), it expresses itself in rhythm: wherever he speaks through the mask of madness, his words are prose.

Scene 2 opens with Hamlet's instructions to the players: —

> "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently," etc.

This is in the prose form because it is practical, business-like, professional advice. It is not the real Hamlet — the Prince of Denmark — that speaks it; or, if it be, it is not from the storm-brooding deeps of his breast that it comes, but from the surface of his mind.

When the players have gone out, and he has sent away the others, he calls to him his true friend, Horatio. With him, as before, he immediately begins to speak in verse, for now the real Hamlet is uttering the sincerity of his soul.

Then follows the scene of the poisoning

play. Twice only, during this, does Hamlet drop his mask and speak in rhythm. Both instances are spoken aside to Ophelia, and both are but fragments of lines. The first is after the prologue has been recited : —

Oph. 'T is brief, my lord.
Ham. As woman's love.

The second is where the play-queen makes a vow never, once a widow, to be a wife : —

Ham. [*To Ophelia*] If she should break it now ?

After the King has broken off the play and Hamlet is left alone with Horatio, it might be expected that he would express his exultation to his friend in verse. But it is like a real madman that he now speaks. Half frenzied with excitement by the suspense, and then by the success of his plot, he breaks out into hysterical gayety, in scraps of rhyme, mingled with disjointed prose. Just so, afterward, does the crazed Ophelia.

Then with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern he talks again, at first bantering, then sharply reproving them ; but both moods are of the cool mind, not of the earnest heart, and are therefore expressed in prose : —

Re-enter Players *with recorders.*

Ham. O, the recorders ! let me see one. To with-

draw with you: — why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'T is as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

When Polonius comes in to summon him to the Queen, Hamlet "plays upon" him in this wise: —

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that 's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and it 's like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then I will come to my mother by and by. [*Aside*] They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

But, in every other case, when he has said, "Leave me, friends," and he is left alone, his own thought expresses itself in rhythm.

There is no more prose till Scene 3 of Act IV. Here, in his character of madman, he speaks concerning the body of Polonius, whom he has slain by mistake for the King. So in the next scene: —

King. Now, Hamlet, where 's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper! Where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.

. . . . . .

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*

Ham. He will stay till ye come.

In Act IV., Scene 5, occurs the most piteous passage in all Shakespeare, that of Ophelia's madness; yet it is in prose: —

Queen. Nay, but, Ophelia, —

Oph. Pray you, mark.

[*Sings*] White his shroud as the mountain snow, —

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Oph. [*Sings*] Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray you, let 's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[*Sings*] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.

. . . . . .

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good-night, ladies; — good-night, sweet ladies; good-night, good-night.

In such scenes as this there is no place for the steady beat of verse, the essential nature of which is regulated and orderly rhythm, whereas the very characteristic of the crazed brain is its unregulated, disjointed action — "like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh." Chaotic scraps of prose, obeying no

order but a haphazard surface association, must now be its mode of expression. The bits of lyrical verse, breaking in at random with their mock suggestion of light-hearted gayety, still further deepen the effect by most pathetic contrast.

Act V. opens with the churchyard scene, and the making ready of Ophelia's grave: —

Enter two Clowns, *with spades and pickaxes.*

2 *Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

1 *Clo.* Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

2 *Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

1 *Clo.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

2 *Clo.* Why, he had none.

1 *Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says "Adam digged:" could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself —

2 *Clo.* Go to.

1 *Clo.* What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 *Clo.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 *Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows

does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come.

2 *Clo.* "Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?"

1 *Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

2 *Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

1 *Clo.* To 't.

2 *Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET *and* HORATIO, *at a distance.*

1 *Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are asked this question next, say a "grave-maker:" the houses that he makes last till doomsday. . . .

[*Digs and sings.*

. . . . . .

[*Throws up another skull.*

Ham. There 's another; why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries; is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? . . . The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

. . . . . .

But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the King.

Enter Priests, *etc., in procession ; the Corpse of* OPHELIA, LAERTES *and* Mourners *following ;* KING, QUEEN, *their trains, etc.*

The Queen, the courtiers: who is that they follow?
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo it own life.

And thus the scene goes on in solemn verse.

It is easy here to see why the grave-diggers talk in prose. Their absurd burlesque of logic and wit is almost as far removed from the sphere of ordinary verse as lunacy would be. But why does Hamlet use prose? One reason may be that what he says is thrown into the midst of a scene which is already going on in prose. At least it is very likely that a part of what he says, if occurring in a versified scene, would have taken on the prevailing form of rhythm. Yet Shakespeare does not hesitate to change the form, even several times in the midst of a scene, where the different moods seem to require it. The real reason for Hamlet's prose here is, I believe, that it is his mind that is speaking, not his heart. There is no deep feeling or earnestness of purpose in what he says. It is rather the idle, speculative, half-humorous play of a mind that is merely waiting between more important events. Not until the stately funeral procession comes suddenly

in sight, solemnly moving toward Ophelia's grave, does he rouse himself from this transient mood, and the deep current of his real thought and feeling set forward again. Then he immediately begins, as we have seen above, to speak in verse.

But the end of the play draws on apace. The mood deepens more and more. There is no longer any prose, or any room for prose, with one exception. In the middle of Scene 2 of the last act, Osric enters, and, in order to bring himself to the level of this pert coxcomb, Hamlet drops from the sad and stately rhythm of his thought once more and for the last time.

Brought into this lighter mood by the presence of Osric, he continues in it for a moment after his exit, and goes on speaking in prose to Horatio: —

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds.

So much of his reply is in prose, because he is speaking merely his surface thought about the wager. But in the midst of his answer his voice falls into rhythmical flow; the heart is speaking now. "Sea was it, yet working after storm," and its waves beat on in measured rise and fall: —

" But thou wouldst
Not think how ill all 's here about my heart."

Then stopping abruptly, he breaks the rhythm with a phrase in prose, just as the idea breaks the flow of his feeling : —

But it is no matter.
Hor. Nay, good my lord, —

Then Hamlet replies, trying to turn it lightly, and so not allowing his words to be rhythmical and earnest : —

It is but foolery ; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman.
Hor. If your mind dislike anything, obey it : I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.
Ham. Not a whit ; we defy augury : there 's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow.

Then his words fall into verse again, as the feeling deepens in the shadowy presage of death : —

If it be now, 't is not to come ; if it
Be not to come, it will be now ; if it
Be not now, yet it will come : the readiness
Is all. Since no man has aught of what he leaves,
What is 't to leave betimes ?

This last passage is always printed in the form of prose. I have given it as above, to show how rhythmical it is. In the third line from the end if "it will" be read "'t will," and in the next line "man has" be read

"man's," the passage makes perfect metre. The lines might be broken differently, as follows: —

> If it be now, 't is not to come;
> If it be not to come, it will be now;
> If it be not now (—), yet it will come:
> The readiness is all. Since no man (ha)s aught
> Of what he leaves, what is 't to leave betimes?

There is no further prose in "Hamlet." Sad and strong, the current of the verse flows on to the close.

Let us, in conclusion, gather up some of the points which such a study gives us. Verse differs from prose in being, in the broadest sense of the word, musical or harmonious. It is therefore the natural form of expression for emotion. Wherever a scene is occupied with mere ideas, it is in prose, changing to verse, if at all, where the ideas merge into feelings. On the other hand, any entire play or any detached scene which is full of intense feeling is in verse, changing to prose only where emotions give way to ideas, whether logical, practical, or jocular. Again, verse, and especially so-called blank verse, is essentially orderly and coherent. It is therefore fitted to express only emotion which is under the control of the reason. Whenever it passes beyond, into frenzy or madness, it must cease to express it-

self in regular verse, just as music has no voice for passion that has broken its banks and become a destroying deluge. That can only find (or fail in seeking to find) utterance in unmusical wailing or screams. Rhythmical harmony of any high sort, whether that of Beethoven or that of Shakespeare, is majestic and noble, like the orderly sweep of planets in their spheres, "still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim." It can only well express, therefore, feeling that is noble, or that, at least, through its power, has some element of nobility, or thought that is deep and strong enough to carry feeling with it. Clowns and jesters and drunken men and the trivial business of every-day life get expressed in prose. So does wit, however refined. So does pleasure, unless it be the deep joy of love or death, that lies so close to pain.

Doubtless prose scenes are often thrown into the drama for the sake of relieving the strain on the feelings which the tragical action or passion has caused. The capacity for deep feeling must be renewed at intervals by breathing spaces of a lighter tone. But the nature of the scene is what is chosen for this purpose, not the prose or verse form of its expression; this is always self-determined and never open to choice.

Shakespeare's prose is wonderfully natural.

Though written for the stage, it seems real life; not like the modern novelist's real-life prose, which always seems written for the stage. What novels he would have written, with what delicious subtlety of humor, with what shrewd insight of observation he would have portrayed the lower world of ideas and characteristics, had he not chosen to depict that higher world of passion and character. His prose would have given us, beyond any of the novelists or historians, charming pictures of what men think and do; but it is fortunate for us that he chose rather to give us in verse, beyond any of the other poets, the perfect expression of what men feel and are.

AN IMPRESSION OF BALZAC

When a man comes into the world endowed with vigorous perception, a retentive memory, and that species of imagination which is only a *potpourri* of memories, made grotesque and fantastic by their incongruous intermixture, it is a matter of the merest accident what he will write; or whether he will write on paper, or on canvas with a brush. Dickens might have been Doré, and Doré Dickens. It is even true of the greatest artists to a certain extent. Michael Angelo "relished versing;" Dante was interrupted at the easel by his "persons of importance;" Milton might never have returned to poetry but for the failure of the Good Old Cause; and Shakespeare would have written great novels if any such invention had been known in his day. When a powerfully endowed man, such as Balzac certainly was, with all his limitations, does chance to spend a lifetime in writing fiction, and, moreover, without the accident of any immediate popularity of one volume or another to determine the particular form or quality of his work, so that he

continues to pour out a flood of all manner of fiction, — good, bad, and indifferent, clean and unclean, romantic and realistic, — it is like characterizing the surface of the globe to characterize his productions. His mind was a great mirror, — not without its cracks and blurs, — and it imaged the whole phantasmagoria of superficially seen objects and events. The forty volumes of his "Comédie Humaine" he well denominates *Scènes;* they are scenes in provincial life, in Parisian life, in military life, in political life, — everywhere, except in the real and true human life universal. Balzac is at the other extreme of evolution from those creatures over whose whole surface some dim, undifferentiated sense of sight is diffused. In him the visual sense has not only become concentrated and distinct, but it has absorbed all the other powers. He is all eye. "*Penser, c'est voir!*" he makes Louis Lambert exclaim. The phrase explains all the excellence of Balzac's method, at the same time that it pronounces its sentence of final inadequacy. "To think" is indeed "to see;" only there must be not only sight, but insight. Merely to "watch,"

> "When Observation is not sympathy,"

may give apprehension, but not comprehen-

sion. The great retinas of the ox and owl see, and do not see. "Louis Lambert" itself illustrates Balzac's greatness and his weakness. It begins as a vivid photograph, and ends in grandiloquent fog. His longer stories remind one of the advertisement of some modern play "in five acts and nineteen tableaux." They are all in one act and a thousand tableaux. Sometimes they show a temporary grasp of true constructive genius, but oftener it is a tedious bewilderment of jostling forms. A rapid survey of his works in memory gives us the impression of a great theatre seen behind the curtain after the ruin and confusion of a partial conflagration. A multitude of dramatic "effects" are piled together, — shreds of costume, tinsel but vividly glittering, broken clumps of highly colored wooden landscape, comic and tragic appurtenances, stage swords and stage blood-clots, a whole imaginative world gone back to chaos, — but nothing consecutive or true to reality.

"Le Père Goriot" is a novel of caricature. Its characters are no more possible than those of Dickens, and yet not less probable. No mere puppets, constructed by inexperience and lack of observation, they all move and speak most humanly, for every separate trait is a quick transcript of some detached bit of ob-

served life. Yet they are not real. It is not likely that any one ever finds himself, with sudden dismay of conscience, in Balzac's mirror, as he constantly does in that of Thackeray or George Eliot. His characters are full of visible human mechanism, but they lack those mainsprings of motive such as we find in ourselves. "Le Père Goriot" is a painful story. It has that test of a fundamentally worthless book, — it leaves a man sadder without leaving him wiser. The hero is a vulgar King Lear. Feeble-mindedness in him replaces madness, and the disagreeable replaces the sublime. Balzac is, however, as different from those few merely brutal Parisians of to-day who unfortunately represent French literature to the ignorance of so many Americans, as soul is from flesh. He differs from them as being a man of intellect. But, like them, he seems to paint pain not because he pities it but because he is coolly interested in it. The reader sits as at a bull-fight or a Christian martyrdom; and if he is entertained, he may as well confess to himself that it is because civilization has not yet succeeded in completely extirpating the nerve of ferocious enjoyment of pain. The whole-souled admirer of Balzac may find the psychological explanation of his interest in certain passages not far off from that of the audience

which likes those war lectures and articles best that describe the most "mowing down" of ranks and general preparation for surgery. It is, in either case, a poignant and brutal enjoyment, however popular an one, and vulgar enough, if we venture to subject it to cold analysis.

The "Duchesse de Langeais" is a tedious tale, as if told after dinner by a guest who for the most part drowses, but occasionally rouses himself to startling power. Few things of Balzac's illustrate better how his narrative facility gets the better of him. It runs on and runs on. It is with him as Henry Taylor said of Macaulay, "his memory swamps his mind." The story is, in reality, all told in the prelude of the convent scene. A greater artist, with a Shakespearean sense of plot interest or a deeper mind, with a more profound sense of the intolerableness of tears and wounds unrelieved by some onlooking hope, would never have gone back from that beginning to gloat over the woes that lead up to the final woe. It is as if the novelist played with his characters — doomed and plainly declared to be doomed — as a cat plays with a half-dead mouse.

The stories and sketches so far translated are well enough chosen to give bits of all sorts of Balzac's writing, — all, at least, that would

bear this climate. They are never vicious, but there is a tolerably frank animalism in the point of view. The motives and qualities portrayed are not such as interest the best of us in each other. It is always man and woman seen closely and depicted strenuously, but seen only skin-deep, — and to that depth we are still the primitive animal. The sketch, "A Passion in the Desert," represents Balzac at his best. Nothing could be more perfect than these pictures.

The sudden birth of an interest in Balzac in this country is symptomatic of several things. In the first place, like the recent interest in Russian literature, it denotes a commendable aspiration to reach out beyond our own provincial horizon, and to learn what it is that other races and temperaments admire. Furthermore, it indicates a partial reaction from the too-easy accepted delusion that all French literature is highly objectionable, and especially all realistic French novels. But the interest in Balzac, particularly, suggests above all the suspicion that our civilization — and shall we say peculiarly that of the region from which this series of translations emanates? — has reached the stage of profound *ennui*. The mind that craves the endless narratives of Balzac must be, if not individually *ennuyé*, at least

the product of a society that is so. It is only when one has lost the vigorous freshness of an interest in real life, as it actually lies throbbing about him, that such fiction can greatly prosper with him. Yet it is something gained if weariness with the near ends in aspiration for the distant; and, once out of one's petty province, one may chance to go very far.

THREE SONNETS

A LITERARY friend of mine, who is a little irritable and subject to attacks of extreme views, has made a rather late discovery of the fine qualities of modern French literature. Accordingly, in order to be well off with the old love before being on with the new, he has taken to reviling the German. How many people, he wants to know, have gone to the study of German because of the alluring tradition that Carlyle was to "find what he wanted there"? And of the number how many have come to make the reflection that if, indeed, he found it he must have taken it all away with him? The trouble is, perhaps, that my friend went to the Germans for imaginative literature. And now he finds their literature essentially unpoetic. Their fiction, he says, is diffuse and tedious. In his worst moments he insists that their poetry is dull. At first attractive, the monotonous canter or jog-trot of its metres becomes wearisome, with the noisy click and clank of their consonant-encumbered rhymes. Moreover, it is always *Blumen* and *Blumen*, and never any

particular species of flower; always *Duft* and *Luft*, *Klagen* and *Schlagen*, *Herz* and *Schmerz*, and never any specific variety of sound or color or feeling. It is as if only the commonest aspects of nature or life had ever been apprehended, and these few meagre "properties" had been handed on from one poet to another as perpetual heirlooms. This is, no doubt, the exaggerated view of a late convert to another *cultus*. Yet it is no wonder that he is charmed with the recent school of French poets. How delicate, how subtile, how opalescent, with all manner of vanishing gleams of beauty, natural and spiritual, seems this poetry, compared with that of their more heavily moulded neighbors! The sonnets of Sully Prudhomme, for example, — it is impossible to translate them; tint and perfume have vanished from the pressed flower. But one is possessed to attempt it, as in the three sonnets offered here: —

SIESTE

Je passerai l'été dans l'herbe, sur le dos,
La nuque dans les mains, les paupières mi-closes,
Sans mêler un soupir à l'haleine des roses,
Ni troubler le sommeil léger des clairs échos;

Sans peur je livrerai mon sang, ma chair, mes os,
Mon être, au cours de l'heure et des métamorphoses,
Calme, et laissant la foule innombrable des causes
Dans l'ordre universel assurer mon repos;

Sous le pavillon d'or que le soleil déploie,
Mes yeux boiront l'éther, dont l'immuable joie
Filtrera dans mon âme au travers de mes cils,

Et je dirai, songeant aux hommes : " Que font-ils ? "
Et le ressouvenir des amours et des haines
Me bercera, pareil au bruit des mers lointaines.

SIESTA

All summer let me lie along the grass,
Hands under head, and lids that almost close ;
Nor mix a sigh with breathings of the rose,
Nor vex light-sleeping echo with " Alas ! "

Fearless, I will abandon blood, and limb,
And very soul to the all-changing hours ;
In calmness letting the unnumbered powers
Of nature weave my rest into their hymn.

Beneath the sunshine's golden tent uplift
Mine eyes shall watch the upper blue unfurled,
Till its deep joy into my heart shall sift

Through lashes linked ; and, dreaming on the world,
Its love and hate, or memories far of these,
Shall lull me like the sound of distant seas.

ETHER

Quand on est sur la terre étendu sans bouger,
Le ciel paraît plus haut, sa splendeur plus sereine ;
On aime à voir, au gré d'une insensible haleine,
Dans l'air sublime fuir un nuage léger ;

Il est tout ce qu'on veut : la neige d'un verger,
Un archange qui plane, une écharpe qui traîne,
Ou le lait bouillonnant d'une coupe trop pleine ;
On le voit différent sans l'avoir vu changer.

Puis un vague lambeau lentement s'en détache,
S'efface, puis un autre, et l'azur luit sans tache,
Plus vif, comme l'acier qu'un souffle avait terni.

Tel change incessament mon être avec mon âge ;
Je ne suis qu'un soupir animant un nuage,
Et je vais disparaître, épars dans l'infini.

THE CLOUD

Couched on the turf, and lying mute and still,
While the deep heaven lifts higher and more pure,
I love to watch, as if some hidden lure
It followed, one light cloud above the hill.

The flitting film takes many an aspect strange :
An orchard's snow ; a far-off, sunlit sail ;
A fleck of foam ; a seraph's floating veil.
We see it altered, never see it change.

Now a soft shred detaches, fades from sight ;
Another comes, melts, and the blue is clear
And clearer, as when breath has dimmed the steel.

Such is my changeful spirit, year by year :
A sigh, the soul of such a cloud, as light
And vanishing, lost in the infinite.

DE LOIN

Du bonheur qu'ils rêvaient toujours pur et nouveau
Les couples exaucés ne jouissent qu'une heure.
Moins ému leur baiser ne sourit ni ne pleure ;
Le nid de leur tendresse endevient le tombeau.

Puisque l'œil assouvi se fatigue du beau,
Que la lèvre en jurant un long culte se leurre,
Que des printemps d'amour le lis dès qu'on l'effleure,
Où vont les autres lis va lambeau par lambeau,

J'accepte le tourment de vivre éloigné d'elle.
Mon homage muet, mais aussi plus fidèle,
D'aucue lassitude en mon cœur n'est puni ;

Posant sur sa beauté mon respect comme un voile
Je l'aime sans désir, comme on aime une étoile,
Avec le sentiment qu'elle est à l'infini.

IN SEPARATION

The bliss that happy lovers dream will bloom
Forever new shall scarce outlast the year :
Their calmer kisses wake nor smile nor tear ;
Love's nesting-place already is its tomb.

Since sated eyes grow weary of their prey,
And constant vows their own best hopes betray,
And love's June lily, marred but by a breath,
Falls where the other lilies lie in death,

Therefore the doom of land and sea that bar
My life from hers I do accept. At least
No passion will rise jaded from the feast,

My pure respect no passing fires can stain;
So without hope I love her, without pain,
Without desire, as one might love a star.

THE CHARMS OF SIMILITUDE

It is surprising what a pleasure we take in an apt similitude. Not only does it enter largely into our enjoyment of poetry, but it gives zest to all bright colloquial talk. The voluble centre of any group of listeners — on the street or in the drawing-room — is sure to be heard spicing his narration with the "like" and "as" of the frequent simile. If I were a novelist (as I do not at all thank Heaven I am not) I would keep lists of good similitudes; not only those of my own invention, — which I should not expect to be prosperous, — but those picked up by the wayside in actual speech. It is not so much that they adorn the expression of thought as that they illuminate it. Or if they adorn, it is as the modern jewelry, set with the electric spark. It used to be supposed that in poetry, for instance, figures of speech were for mere ornamentation. Now we know that in good poetry they are chiefly used for throwing light. So in colloquial speech: the reason we enjoy them seems to be that they hit out the idea like a flash. There is nothing the

mind enjoys, after all, like getting an idea and getting it *quick*, — which is only giving in a nutshell the gist of Herbert Spencer's admirable essay on Style. A friend was telling me the other day that he had a new cook. He said (he is a small man), "I am afraid of her. She is as big as a bonded warehouse." I saw in the paper lately that somebody expressed himself as being "dry as a covered bridge." And how can we declare the fineness of anything so well as by saying it is "fine as a fiddle"? The alliteration, no doubt, helps, but it does not count for very much. You could not substitute *fish* or *feather* or *fife* or *flamingo* though each is fine after a fashion. Nothing will serve but the "fiddle," with its preternatural shine of varnish, its perky angles and curves, — pointed like a saucy nose, — with perhaps (but this is venturing into deep psychological water) a suggestion, sub-conscious, of the jaunty fiddler with his airs and graces, dressed as if just out of a bandbox. "Lively as a flea" seems good and lively, but an old sea-captain of mine used to say "he flew around like a flea in a hot skillet." "Like a bumblebee in a bass drum" describes the activity of a different sort of temperament.

Why would it not make a pleasant occupation for a rainy day ("wet-weather work," as Ik

Marvel would phrase it) to collect what seem to us the most beautiful similitudes of our favorite poets? If, for instance, we were quoting from Longfellow, perhaps it would be: —

"When she had passed it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music."

If from Shelley, it might be: —

"And multitudes of dense, white, fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind."

If from Matthew Arnold, it might be the close of that beautiful ebb and flow of rhythmical meditation, "Dover Beach:" —

"And we are here as on a darkling plain,
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

If Browning, would it be his "Last Words," with their likening of the seen-unseen Beloved to the thither side of the moon?

I would like the liberty of imparting to the Contributors' Club an odd thing that has happened to me; though it may be, for aught I know, a common experience. I began, when a boy, to keep an *index rerum*. It never got farther than a beautifully arranged table of contents, and a few scattering entries made while the volume had the nutritious fragrance

of the bindery still upon it. Among these entries, on a page headed Similitudes, are two similes, in very yellow ink. Now the interesting point is that I have totally forgotten whether they were original or selected. I *hope* they were my own; but they sound more as if they might have come from Longfellow's "Hyperion," or from some Conversation of Landor's. It may be that every schoolboy (except myself) will recognize and locate them, and that some lively contributor will treat me with cold sarcasm, at some future sitting of the Club, for my ignorance. Here they are: —

"This earthly life is like an album at an inn: we turn over its pages curiously or wearily, and write a scrap of wisdom or of folly, and away."

"He who has loved and served an art is like the child that was nursed by Persephone: he is not subject to the woes of other men, for he has lain in the lap and on the bosom of a goddess."

BOOKS OF REFUGE

"Up to forty," says the adage, "a man seeks pleasure; after forty he shuns pain." However this may be as to exact ages, there can be no doubt that, as we get on in life, we come to value things not merely as they promise some increment of positive enjoyment, but as they fortify the spirit against positive suffering. In one's relations to literature, for instance, certain books acquire a greater and greater value in that they provide a harbor of refuge when the mind's barometer begins to fall, and one's moods are overcast and threatening.

There really are three pretty distinct classes of books having this peculiar value; and it becomes, at times, a nice question of spiritual practice which of the three sorts of remedy is to be, as the old doctors used to say, "exhibited."

To begin with, there is a class of writings that are good for nothing else but *pour passer le temps*. For this purpose, however (and it may happen to be, in certain crises, the most important purpose in the world to us), they are

invaluable. They have precisely the opposite effect to that which the author of "Friends in Council" attributes to tobacco. The lighted pipe, he says, serves to arrest and make tangible the passing moment. It applies the air-brake to the wheels of Time, and enables us to discern the distinct outlines of that Present which otherwise — so rapidly and incessantly does it rush from being Future to having become Past — can scarcely be said to exist for us at all. It does that which the Autocrat used to imagine as being done to the whizzing mind-machinery, — sticks a lever in among the cogs, and brings them, for once, to a standstill. Now the kind of literature of which I speak has, I say, the precisely opposite effect. It so quickens the flight of time as to obliterate the present moment, with all its "gain-giving," its remorse, its too acute memory of personal mortification, its thickening Brocken shadow of one's own unprofitableness, of whatever sort. Such books, as if to help us make doubly sure of escaping the clutches of Faust's evil one, go to the other extreme from the utterance that was to signal his diabolic seizure, "Stay, fleeting moment, thou art so fair!" and say, instead, "Fly, lagging moments, ye are so foul!" Perhaps no one is so constantly merry as not to need, on occasion, such pass-the-times.

Each will have his own volumes for such a purpose, according to temperament and taste. To one, the book of travel will be the most effective. To another, the chain of a plot interest is necessary to hold the mind away from its own infelicities; and the novel of adventure, like Reade's or Black's or Clarke Russell's, or the novel of caricature, like Dickens's, will be best. To another, it will be some volume of the old ballads or romances, or Chaucer, or the lighter plays of Shakespeare. To still another, the very best distraction will be some work of natural science, potent to draw the mind away not only from its own cares and moods, but from the whole region of human complexities, into the colorless air of material things, that "toil not, neither do they spin;" that "neither marry nor are given in marriage;" that are as remote from the pain of excessive joy as from that of excessive woe. But perhaps the best resource for the average man is to be found in the light literature of the French; especially if one does not know the tongue so perfectly as to destroy the additional interest that always comes from making one's way in a foreign language, where a little excitement of conjecture attends the accurate valuation of here and there a word. The novels of the elder Dumas, for example, — how

lightly they fillip the slow-jogging hours of a dull evening, and with what abandon one may *lie back*, so to speak, on the virile author's secure mastery of the planetary and cometary orbits of his always impossible but never improbable characters! The Elizabethan dramatists are great for this purpose of rescuing a man from himself. It is but to take five steps to the bookcase, to single out and open a volume, and *presto, change!* We are in a world that has this, among its other great advantages over our own: that the reader cannot possibly encounter himself as one of its habitants. There are times, after some exhausting mental effort, for instance, — as the writing of three pages beyond our proper stent, or the delivery of a lecture in a hall where one could not be heard back of about the third row of benches, or the reception of a call from some Intellectual Young Person who became paralytically fastened to the door-knob, — when one is left very much in the condition of Grandfather Smallweed after his discharge of the pillow at his fireside companion. At such times, all that one requires is to be shaken up and taken out of himself for a change of view; it hardly matters in what direction. Then Shakespeare is one's most priceless friend.

A second species of books of refuge is that

sort which fortify us against our "bad quarter-hours," by bracing up our own moral tone or our philosophical heroism. They are not so much remedies for the present attack, perhaps, as preventives of such in the future. They are the books which make a man ashamed of caring too much whether he be happy or not; which present anew the higher aims and better estimates of life. Such are the ruminations of the old Stoics, and "Sartor Resartus," and the "Conduct of Life," and Wordsworth, and the later poetry of Longfellow, and the great autobiographies.

But there is still a third class, in some respects the most valuable of all. I mean the books that by their mere largeness of scope make all our own haps and mishaps, and states of mind or of fortune, dwindle to insignificance. Their voice appeals every case from *die kleine* to *die grosse welt*. Their motives and judgments are no longer those of our *lehrjahre*, but those of our *wanderjahre*. If, in French literature, Dumas represents the pass-the-time species, George Sand may be taken as representative of this self-obliterating species. Such also is Turgénieff, and such is Goethe. Of our English writers, George Eliot belongs to this class, and Landor, and the great historians, and Browning, and, again, Shakespeare in his

deeper dramas. For all these are writers who see the world so large, and feel life so deep and full, that from their plane we watch only the rolling globe, and see not at all our own little diminished speck of a personality.

THE MOST PATHETIC FIGURE IN STORY

THE inquiry has sometimes suggested itself to me, What is the most pathetic figure in story? When I was a boy, the fate of Evangeline the Acadian always seemed to me the most piteous of all that I had ever known. Not so much at the end, — the woefulness of that finding of her lover *too late* did not impress me so much till those words had taken on their deeper meaning from the experience of life; but the perpetual disappointment, the hope, not crushed and ended, but continually revived, only to be the "hope deferred that maketh the heart sick," — this seemed to me the "pity of it." Most poignant of all appeared that moment in the story, when, as Longfellow tells it, —

"Nearer, ever nearer, among the numberless islands,
Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away o'er the water.
. . . . . .
Gabriel was it, who, weary with waiting, unhappy and restless,
Sought in the Western wilds oblivion of self and of sorrow.

Swiftly they glided along, close under the lee of the island,
But by the opposite bank, and behind a screen of palmettos,
So that they saw not the boat, where it lay concealed in the willows.
All undisturbed by the dash of their oars, and unseen, were the sleepers;
Angel of God, was there none to awaken the slumbering maiden?
Swiftly they glided away, like the shade of a cloud on the prairie.
After the sound of their oars on the tholes had died in the distance,
As from a magic trance the sleepers awoke, and the maiden
Said with a sigh to the friendly priest, 'O Father Felician!
Something says in my heart that near me Gabriel wanders.
Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague superstition?
Or has an angel passed, and revealed the truth to my spirit?'"

In after years, when this tale of the Acadian exiles had lost something of its pathos through mere familiarity, I read Chaucer's story of "Patient Griselde." What reader has it not impressed as a most piteous passage, where the poor mother meekly suffers the supposed loss of her "children twain"? As it reads in the "Clerke's Tale:" —

"This ugly sergeant in the same wise
That he hire doughter caughte, right so he
(Or werse, if men can any werse devise),
Hath bent her sone, ful was of beautee:
And ever in on so patient was she,
That she no chere made of heavinesse,
But kist her sone and after gan it blesse.

"Save this she praied him, if that he might,
Hire litel sone he wold in erthe grave,
His tendre limmes, delicat to sight,
Fro foules and fro bestes for to save."

And, again, when the children are brought back to her alive and well:—

"Whan she this herd aswoune doun she falleth,
For pitous joye, and after hire swouning,
She bothe hire yonge children to hire calleth,
And in hire armes, pitously weping,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissing
Ful like a moder with hire salte teres
She bathed both his visage and his heres.

"'O tendre, o dere, o yonge children mine!
Your woful moder wened steadfastly
That cruel houndes or som foul vermine
Had eten you; but God of his mercy,
And your benigne fader tendrely
Hath don you kepe:' and in that same stound
Al sodenly she swapt adoun to ground."

Still later it seemed to me (and perhaps justly) that the instant when Lear recognizes Cordelia should be accounted the most pathetic instant of all recorded human destiny. Let me

here, however, make the confession (and it goes toward showing that the drama of Shakespeare should be played as well as read, always provided it be played worthily) that it was not till I saw Edwin Booth portray the part that I realized its full power. It is where the old king stretches out his arms, and cries: —

> "Pray, do not mock me!
> I am a very foolish, fond old man,
> Fourscore and upward. . . .
> Do not laugh at me;
> For as I am a man, I think this lady
> To be my child Cordelia!"

But there is a pathos that moves the intellect, rather than the source of tears. And to this faculty it has sometimes seemed, as I have meditated on the woeful possibilities of human fate, that nothing can be more sorrowful than the destiny of Tithonus, the moon's aged and immortal lover: —

> "The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
> The vapors weep their burden to the ground,
> Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
> And after many a summer dies the swan.
> The only cruel immortality
> Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
> Here at the quiet limit of the world,
> A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
> The ever silent spaces of the East,
> Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.
> . . . . . .

I asked thee, 'Give me immortality.'
Then did thou grant my asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and warr'd and wasted me,
And though they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth.

"Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, though even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me?
. . . . . .
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the stream
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead."

But to me now, as I recall the "moving accidents" of written story, perhaps that appears most touching which Scott relates in the poem of "Helvellyn;" though the chord which it touches be not of sympathy with manhood, but only of faithful dog-hood, most "tender and true." The quaint prelude relates, in its old-fashioned prose, how "a young gentleman of talents and of a most amiable disposition perished by losing his way on the mountain. His remains were not discovered till three months

afterwards, when they were found guarded by a faithful terrier bitch, his constant attendant during frequent solitary rambles through the wilds of Cumberland and Westmoreland." It is the same incident that Wordsworth celebrates in a poem which has no passage of anything like the imaginative power of that which I am about to quote from Scott, yet I will recall to the reader its closing stanzas: —

> "But hear a wonder, for whose sake
> This lamentable tale I tell!
> A lasting monument of words
> This wonder merits well."

(This of the "lasting monument" is very characteristic of the one bard, and how little it would have been characteristic of the other!)

> "The Dog which still was hovering nigh,
> Repeating the same timid cry,
> This Dog had been through three months' space
> A dweller in that savage place.
> Yes, proof was plain that since the day
> When this ill-fated Traveler died,
> The Dog had watched about the spot,
> Or by his master's side:
> How nourished here through such long time
> He knows, who gave that love sublime;
> And gave that strength of feeling, great
> Above all human estimate!"

And this is the passage from Scott, doubtless familiar to a hundred for every one who re-

members the "lasting monument" which the profounder yet often weaker poet wrought: —

"Not yet quite deserted, though lonely extended,
For, faithful in death, his mute favorite attended,
The much-loved remains of her master defended,
And chased the hill-fox and the raven away.

"*How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?*
When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst thou start?
How many long days and long weeks didst thou number,
Ere he faded before thee, the friend of thy heart?
And, oh, was it meet that — no requiem read o'er him,
No mother to weep, and no friend to deplore him,
And thou, little guardian, alone stretch'd before him
Unhonor'd the Pilgrim from life should depart?

. . . . . .

But meeter for thee, gentle lover of nature,
To lay down thy head like the meek mountain lamb,
When, wilder'd, he drops from some cliff high in stature,
And draws his last sob by the side of his dam."

After all, be it noted, this is not a morbid but a very wholesome direction of inquiry. The contemplation of the real pathos of other lives, even if they be but products of the "blind life within the brain," may haply save us from that most contemptible of illusions, — the self-

pitying fancy that there is anything specially pathetic or tragic in the commonplace fortunes of our own little well-enough-to-do and tea-and-toast-consuming life.

GERMAN LYRIC POETRY *vs.* FRENCH

If the best French lyric poetry of modern days has indisputably a charm of refinement and delicate beauty all its own, the best of the German has an inveterate earnestness and a depth of feeling that endear it to all who have really come into its world. One does not so often say of it, "How exquisite!" "How beautiful!" but if there be in any one's pocket-book some long-treasured scrap of verse, well worn now at the fold and edges, the chances are that if it is not English — written, I mean, on English soil — it is German.

Not only does the time-spirit work his special wonders, giving to one epoch the ballad, to another the drama, to another the subjective lyric, but the place-spirit, as well, has always wrought his own characteristic marvels. Each continent and island and mountain rampart and valley basin has had its particular dippings in the sea and liftings into the air, its glacier-ploughing and meteor-sowing, not in vain. The result is that each spot produces its own flowers and its own weeds in literature. So, if

no German could ever have written Béranger's rollicking "Je suis vilain et très vilain, — Je suis vilain," or Hugo's "Le Cimetière d'Eylau," or De Vigny's "Le Cor," or De Musset's "Le Poëte," or Coppée's "Intimités," or "Les Epreuves" of Sully Prudhomme, it is equally certain that no Frenchman could have written Freiligrath's "O lieb', so lang du lieben kannst!" or Hartmann's "Seit Sie Gestorben," or Grün's "Der Letzte Dichter," or any poem of Goethe's or Schiller's.

It would be difficult to say just what this essence is which exists in one and not in the other. We vaguely feel the difference, rather than distinctly perceive it. The persistent earnestness of the German poem is one thing. The French lyric may be serious enough, and even sad; but we feel it to be a passing mood, or a mood that surely *will* pass, in time. The German poem appears to go down, for foundation, to a sense of the permanent and essential seriousness of all human existence. It is written against a background that reflects a "sober coloring" upon all its feeling. The French lyric may be "a thing woven as out of rainbows," but not on this "ground of eternal black."

The contrast in the two views of nature is very marked. The French poet sees a thou-

sand delicate shades that the German misses. Is there a German equivalent for the *nuance* of the French perception and feeling? But the every-day, obvious scenes of nature, its massive aspects and forces, the things that every man encounters, — these the German poet renders again with a full heart.

Perhaps the best topics on which to feel the difference are those two immemorial inspirers of song, war and love. When the German poet sings of war, it is with the solemnity of Körner's "Gebet Während der Schlacht." When the French poet sings of it, it is with the "Gai! Gai!" of Béranger. In the one, you hear the heavy tread of men, a dull, regular beat, which, after all, is not very distinguishable to the ear, as to whether it be an advancing column or a funeral march. In the other, you hear only the bugles ringing, and shouts of enthusiasm and excitement.

In their treatment of love there is even sharper contrast. The German word *liebe* has quite a different atmosphere of suggestion from the French *amour*. The German poet sings of love and home; you feel that there is at least a possibility that the passion of to-day will outlast the year, or the years. Constancy is one of its very elements. When the French poet sings of love, it is very delicate, rosy, beautiful,

but we do not hear of home. When his mistress is past her youth, we ask ourselves, will she be thus loved and sung?

There is another side, certainly. It is only the German side that I am just now undertaking to defend, and it is easy to fall into the advocate's fault of ignoring the opposite point of view. The truth is, it is a good thing that we have both these literatures. Both strains of music are a delight: the deep, steady, human tones of the German 'cello, and the brilliant, vibrant, penetrating notes of the French violin.

The German poetry has certainly less variety than the French; but it speaks of life, and is not life, in its depth and essence, something of a monotone? Seek variety as we may, there is but one winter, one summer, in the year. There is but one sort of friendship, one species of abiding love, one ultimate close to all our comedies or tragedies.

Let me not be understood to imply that the French poet is never in earnest, never elemental and hearty in his feeling. It is too easy to make these partial statements sound universal, and therefore manifestly unjust. Skillful as so many of the French are in writing what merely makes the hour pass delightfully, there are some who know how to enrich it as well. There is no national literature that

furnishes too many of those magicians who not only fillip the hour-glass, but make it run pure gold.

A source of frequent injustice to the German lyric poets is the abominable English translation that is usually furnished with German songs. If they contain sonorous syllables, fairly suited to the voice, it is all that seems to be required by the publishers of music; any beauty or sense is permitted to evaporate in passing from one language to the other. I was struck by a new instance of this, only yesterday, in the Polish songs of Chopin. One of them was rendered so badly that I thought I might venture to give here another version, imperfect as it is, and not yet tried with the notes:

MIR AUS DEN AUGEN

"Away! Let not mine eyes, my heart, behold you!"
It was your right to choose; I heard you say,
"Forget! We must forget!" Love might have told you
'T was vain. You could not, more than I, obey.

As the dim shadows down the pastures lengthen,
The further sinks the day-star's fading fire,
So in your breast will tender memories strengthen,
Deeper and darker as my steps retire.

At every hour, in every place of meeting,
Where we together shared delight and pain,
Yes, everywhere will dear thoughts keep repeating,
"Here, too, his voice, his look, his touch, remain!"

And since I have given a German lyric, it might not be amiss to close with a French one, of which I have tried to give some hint, at least, in English, — a sonnet from the new volume of Sully Prudhomme : —

L'AMOUR ASSASSINÉ

Poor wretch ! that smites, in his despair insane,
The tender mouth for which he has no bread,
And in some lonely spot, ere it be dead,
Covers the little corse, yet warm, ill-slain :

So I struck down dear Love for being born !
I smoothed the limbs, and closed the eyes, and lone
The darling form was left, 'neath ponderous stones ;
Then, at my deed dismayed, I fled forlorn.

I deemed my love was dead indeed, in vain !
Erect he speaks, close by the open tomb,
Mid April lilacs even there in bloom,

With immortelles his pale brow glorified :
" Thou didst but wound ; I live to seek her side ;
Not by thy hand, not thine, can I be slain ! "

THE CLANG-TINT OF WORDS

It is interesting to notice what a difference there is in words as to their atmosphere. Two terms that the dictionaries give as being nearly or quite synonymous may have widely different values for literary use. Each has its own enveloping suggestiveness, — "airs from Heaven," or emanations from elsewhere. Of two words denoting the same object or action, one may come drawing with it "a light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud;" the other bringing a disagreeable smudge. Accordingly, in the literary art, it is not enough to use language with an exact sense of definitions; one must add to this logical precision a nice instinct for atmospheric effect. Just as a tone of a particular pitch is one thing on a flute, and another on a horn, each having its own *timbre*, so a term having a precise meaning is one thing if it has dropped caroling out of Grecian skies, and from the delicate hands of Keats and Shelley, but quite another thing if it has come clattering and rumbling up out of clodhoppers' horse-talk. Moreover, just as the difference between

tones on various instruments is due to their diverse groups of harmonic over-tones, one superposed on another, so the individual atmosphere of any word comes from its having its own composite set of associations, some faint and vague, some strong and definite, that have through all its history been clustering upon it.

Now, this timbre or clang-tint of words cannot be learned from any dictionary. It must be caught, little by little, from a kind of household familiarity with the choicest writers. *Euphuists*, we may call these best writers of every age; for that much-misunderstood movement of old times, known and ridiculed as *euphuism*, was in reality only a product of this instinct of refinement in the choice of terms. In that passage from Wordsworth's "Brougham Castle," — a warm bit of color that stands out from a cold poem like a flash of red sunset on bare trees in the snow, —

> "Armor rusting in his halls
> On the blood of Clifford calls;
> 'Quell the Scot!' exclaims the Lance;
> 'Bear me to the heart of France!'
> Is the longing of the Shield,"

what could have been substituted for "*quell*"? "*Crush*," "*beat*," "*kill*," "*smash*," — either one would have been out of the question. Or

what could have been used instead of "*bear*"? "*Bring*," "*take*," "*fetch*," "*lug*," — each is impossible. "*Quell*" and "*bear*," by the way, are not terms of every-day use in common speech; yet this is the poet who is popularly supposed, by those who have read about him more than they have read him, to have abjured all merely literary language. The truth is, his distinction is rather that of having passed honest coin instead of counters. He used language not for the sound of it, but for the sense of it. The verse-carpenters had been in the habit of patching up their products with unfelt and unmeant "poetic words;" their work was called "poetry" because it was not prose. But Wordsworth never used a word, whether big or little, Latin or Saxon, except to carry an idea; and he picked them not only according to their exact sense, but according to their exact clang-tint as well.

No doubt one of the most charming among the atmospheric qualities of words is that inevitable suggestion of sincerity in their use which clings about the homely diction of every-day intercourse. Not only Wordsworth, but all of the good modern poets, sing for the most part in the same language in which they would talk; and, for that matter, did not Chaucer, and did not Shakespeare? The best litera-

ture and the best conversation contrive to get on with but one vocabulary. It is only the dreary scribblers that persist in prodding our inattentive brains with startling forms of speech. It is already merry times in literature when we are not any longer afraid of our mother tongue. We instinctively sheer off from any writer who uses what Rogers ("the poet Rogers") called "album words." Certain type-metal terms have come to serve as ear-marks of insincerity and of the mere ambition to write something, — terms that are never used in honest speech, and the employment of which in conversation would make a man feel absurd. When we find the ideas common and the words uncommon we have learned that we may as well put down the volume, or turn the leaf of the magazine. The newspapers have some words of this sort, dear to them, but the *bêtes noires* of all lovers of straightforward English; such are "*peruse*" and "*replete*."

One gets a vivid sense of the different atmosphere about words substantially synonymous in trying to make substitutions in a proof-sheet. For example, the lynx-eyed proof-reader has some day conveyed to you, by means of the delicately unobtrusive intimation of a blue-pencil line, the fact that you have repeated a word three times in the space of a short para-

graph. You have to find a substitute. It is easy to think of half a dozen terms that stand for very nearly the same idea, but it is in the incongruous implications of them all that the difficulty lies. You consult your Book of Synonyms, and find there nearly all you have already thought of, but never any others. There is, however, one further resource. You have had from boyhood the "Thesaurus of English Words." Hundreds of times, during all these years, you have referred to its wonderful wealth of kindred terms. You seem dimly to remember that on one occasion in the remote past you did find in it a missing word you wanted. It shall have one more chance to distinguish itself. Perhaps the sentence to be amended reads thus: "As he tore open the telegram a smile of bitter mockery flickered across his haggard features, and he staggered behind the slender column." Suppose, now, it is the word "*mockery*" for which you seek a substitute. The Thesaurus suggests, a smile of bitter *bathos*, bitter *buffoonery*, bitter *slip-of-the-tongue*, bitter *scurrility*. Or suppose it is "*staggered*" that is to be eliminated. You find as alluring alternatives, he *fluctuated*, he *curveted*, he *librated*, he *dangled*. If each one of these would seem to impart a certain flavor that is hardly required for your present pur-

pose, you may write, he *pranced*, he *flapped*, he *churned*, he *effervesced*, behind the slender column. Or should the word to be removed be "*haggard*," you have your choice between his *squalid* features, his *maculated* features, his *besmeared* features, his *rickety* features. Or, finally, if you are in search of something to fill the place of "*column*," your incomparable handbook allows you to choose freely between the slender *tallness*, the slender *may-pole*, the slender *hummock*, *promontory*, *top-gallant-mast*, *procerity*, *monticle*, or *garret*. The object of this work, says the title-page, is "to facilitate the expression of ideas, and assist in literary composition."

THE OBJECTIONS TO SPELLING REFORM

THERE are two insuperable objections, in my private and heretical opinion, to the so-called "reformed" spelling. One is that it would increase the already too great similarity in words. Syllables that are at present identical only to the ear would then become alike to the eye also. Now the true theory of a visible and audible language demands that *the symbols of ideas should differ as much as the ideas. Rite, right*, and *write* are three wholly distinct ideas, and their symbols ought to be correspondingly distinct. In the natural and undisturbed development of a language they would differ both to ear and to eye; but our present tongue is the result of confusing influences, and the sounds of our speech have been allowed in many instances to lose their differentiation. The eye, however, being a more intellectual organ than the ear, has refused to permit the visible symbols to break down into this indistinguishable similarity. If we cannot have every idea represented by a different symbol to

the ear, at least let us not throw away at the command of a false notion whatever difference remains to the eye. *Mete*, *meat*, *meet*; *night* and *knight*; *sight*, *site*, *cite*; *mind* and *mined*; *aisle* and *isle*; *by*, *bye*, *buy*; *sent*, *scent*, *cent*; *sell* and *cell*; *wait* and *weight*; *all* and *awl*, and a great number of other such pairs or triplets would lose what little is left of their individual identity. Depend upon it, this difference of spelling has not been a result of accident. It has been retained because of a felt instinct of the usefulness of keeping things separate in appearance which are separate in fact. Any one who has dabbled in phonography knows that the fatal defect of all shorthand systems of writing, for any but those who make a long-continued specialty of their use, is the extreme similarity of the signs, especially when combined in words and phrases. The advantage of our alphabet lies in the ingenious diversity of its forms, enabling the eye to seize on the special characteristic of each letter, even in hurried script. This is the secret of its having been retained unchanged through so many generations of men.

My second objection to phonetic spelling is that it would petrify any language in the forms which it happened to have at the moment of adopting the "reform." Now I feel sure, what-

ever certain eminent philologists may say, that the language-making instinct is by no means extinct in us. So far as the iron grip of the dictionaries will let it, language tends to move and change. And this, too, not at haphazard, but in obedience to a felt congruity between sound and sense. One or two examples are as good as a hundred to illustrate this. Why do children and all persons not standing in awe of the dictionary incline to say *tinny* or *teeny* for a minute object, instead of *tiny*, if not that the littleness of the sound is more suited to the littleness of the thing? And why do so many persons show a reluctance to pronouncing the *o* in the name of the Deity short, as in *dog* or *fog?* If a fixed phonetic spelling, backed up by all the power of the more and more tyrannical dictionaries, is allowed to paralyze all the instincts of growth and change in the language, throwing it into a dead and fossil condition before its time, there will be no longer possible such progress as, for example, that from the old English *ic* to the modern I. *Ic* was too insignificant a sound for the whole weight of the first person, and that, too, in its nominative case of willing and acting. The idea needed (and once had) a more fitting sound-symbol, and at last found it again in this noble vowel, a compound whose first tone is *ah*, that broadest and fullest utterance in any language.

PRINCIPLES OF CRITICISM

The value that men have set upon art and literature proves that these have ministered to some deep-seated and permanent human desire. What is this desire? Or if there be more than one, which is the deepest seated and most permanent — in other words, the paramount — desire? The true answer to this question, if we can discover it, must furnish us with a much-needed test for literary and art values. It must, in short, furnish a basis, and the only correct basis, for the criticism of all literary and art products.

For, obviously, before we are in a position to determine the worth of a thing, or the relative worth of any two or three things of the same general sort, we have to inquire, What purpose is this thing intended to serve? What is it expected to do?

Now it is precisely on this point that there seems to have been very confused ideas among critics, — and by this is not meant professional critics only, but all those who have attempted, either for themselves or for others, to

form correct estimates of the value or comparative values, of works of literature and art. Professional critics, especially (for it is they, especially, who have seemed to feel that they must not trust to their instincts, which would often have done better for them, but must make at least a show of having some well-understood basis of critical principles), have apparently been in a position not unlike that of a layman at some mechanics' fair, who undertakes to pass judgment on a machine of whose purpose and uses he has next to no idea.

Perhaps the novel and the poem have been the most conspicuous examples of this failure, on the part of ordinary criticism, to base itself on any clear understanding of what these forms of the literary art are essentially *for*. One novel will be praised on the ground that it has a moral purpose, another on the ground (as by that distinguished critic, M. Taine) that it has not a moral purpose; one on the ground that it paints actual facts from the life, another on the ground that it depicts an ideal world; one on the ground that it gives pleasure, another on the ground that it gives information, and so on. If the novel has not all these objects in view (and some of them are a little inconsistent with each other), which of them has it? And if several of them, which object is the

essential one, — the one which, being accomplished, the novel cannot be a thoroughly poor one, or which, being unaccomplished, it cannot be a thoroughly good one?

So with the poem. The reason that the critics have, through all time, been so ludicrously incapable of making an estimate of any given work of poetry (except in the case of an imitation, where a verdict on the original had already been furnished them) that should be corroborated, unless through accident, by the test of time is that there has been no clear and well-settled opinion as to the true purpose of the poetic art. Is it to move us to "pity and terror," and at the same time do to these feelings some ambiguous thing which Greek scholars never have been exactly able to make out, as Aristotle said; or is it to "please," as everybody else has always said, till De Quincey blew one of his withering blasts at that shallow notion, but as the average critic apparently still continues to believe? Is its true function best fulfilled by being so intelligible that everybody can understand it, or by being so unintelligible that nobody can, except the poet himself, and he only before it gets cold? Is it true that a poem cannot be a true poem unless it is "short;" or are we still permitted to believe that the Iliad is, after all, a sort of poem?

In seeking for reliable principles on which just criticism may be based, we must, if possible, find those which are broad enough to include all art. Otherwise we should suspect them of not being fundamental principles. For literature is, in fact, one of the fine arts. Not everything that is written, of course, belongs to literature proper; but when a written product becomes a part of what has well enough been called *belles-lettres*, — as a poem, for example, in contradistinction from a Patent Office Report, — it belongs to the art of literature, and is closely allied to the other fine arts; giving us, like them, that immediate and direct satisfaction of a high order which we call æsthetic pleasure, or delight. Literature, as we shall see, gives us much more than this, but this it gives us in common with the other arts.

If, then, we ask for a test or criterion for art in general, the reply may be made, The true test is that it shall be beautiful. But the underlying question is, What is "beauty," and what things are "beautiful"?

Evidently beauty is not a simple quality, apprehended by a distinct inner sense, the "sense of beauty," though it has sometimes crudely been so considered. It is plain enough, on reflection, that beauty is a complex thing, and requires analysis. All great works of art, and

especially of the literary art, are more than merely beautiful, but we may first of all investigate this quality.

Let us take, to begin with, as the simplest of the arts, that of visible form. Its simplest element is the line; then the curved line, as of the mountain or wave outline. Its highest and most complex product is the statue, or group of statuary.

The writers on æsthetics, in their attempts to furnish an analysis of the beautiful, have seemed to hover at a greater or less distance around a central idea, none — unless it be Mr. Herbert Spencer, whose views have been expressed only in scattered suggestions — precisely hitting it, and yet few being far away from it. We mean the idea that beauty gives us *activity* of mind and feeling. Hogarth, for example, speaks of the quality of variety in lines as an element of their beauty. The waving line, or undulating curve, he calls especially the "line of beauty," because it gives the eye much variety of direction without displeasing it (without hindering it, we should prefer to say) by sudden changes of direction. Sir William Hamilton, in likewise attributing the effect of beauty to the union of variety with unity, explains our delight in it by the fact of its giving full play at once to the imagination through

variety, and to the understanding through unity. Alison, attributing the entire effect to the association of ideas, makes beauty to consist in the power of giving active emotions, as of cheerfulness or sadness, and of awakening trains of corresponding ideas in the mind. Mr. James Sully points out the imperfection of this theory in its exclusion of the element of direct æsthetic pleasure derived from color, form, or tone. Mr. Herbert Spencer, following a hint derived from Schiller, considers the æsthetic activities to be essentially the play of the mind. He grades æsthetic pleasures according to the number of powers called into activity; the lowest being the pleasure of mere sensation, as from tone or color; next, the pleasure of perception, as from combinations of color, or symmetries of form; and highest, the pleasure of the æsthetic sentiments proper, composed of multitudinous emotions excited in the mind by associations, some of them reaching far back in the race experience of man.

The central idea, round which these and other theories cluster, is that of *increased activity* as the essential effect of beauty on the mind.

In the two arts of form and of tone, the simplest elements — the straight line and the single tone — may be considered as correspond-

ent. For the tone differs from mere noise in being produced by periodic vibrations, so that in its apprehension our consciousness is continuous; whereas in hearing a mere noise, owing to the interferences of the jumbled vibrations, our consciousness is interrupted and intermittent. Precisely so, an irregular and confused multitude of dots made by the pencil on paper would be a noise in visible form; while a continuous row of dots, that is to say a straight line, would be a tone in form. In the tone as in the line the consciousness is unhindered and continuous. Again, just as we may have a noise of tones which, although musical tones separately, are clashed together in discord, so we may have a noise, so to speak, of lines clean and straight in themselves, but thrown into a tangled mass which the eye cannot follow.

Rising a step higher, we have the curve in form, answering to the melody in music. In either case, its effect is a succession of changes of impression, but of such a nature that the consciousness may be continuous in apprehending them. A jagged and irregularly angular line, on the other hand, would correspond to a haphazard succession of tones, regardless of the conditions of melodious arrangement, since both produce checks and interruptions of

the flowing continuity of consciousness. Hogarth's line of beauty, in other words, is the pleasantest melody of form, because it gives to conscious apprehension the greatest total of sight activity without check.

But a harmony, whether of audible tones or of visible forms, is still more delightful than a melody. Such a harmony of forms we get in the symmetry of two curves above and below a horizontal line, as in the arch of a bridge reflected in a stream, or on the two sides of a vertical line, as in the shapely tree. Its simplest elements might be represented thus: —

More graceful still is the symmetry of two undulating curves, answering to each other, and thus furnishing both melody and harmony. And this brings us to the elements of one of the beautiful forms of ancient art. For joining the extremities of the two curves, we have the vase. If now we add to each side another answering pair of such curves, we have it with the double arms of the Greek amphora. And if we add still another such pair at the top, we have reached a hint of the very

outlines of that which we consider the most graceful of all forms, the human figure. For it would require but slight touches to suggest the head and the veritable arms and limbs of the statue.

No doubt there is much in the beauty of the human form besides the mere symmetry of graceful lines; much that depends on the association of ideas, as, for example, the suggestion of force and activity in muscular curves, —

"Those lines
That sweeping downward breathe, in rest, of motion."

The important thing to notice is that just as the simple grace of the mere outlines is explicable through their ministering to sight activity, so the complex beauty is woven of a thousand threads of vague suggestion, all linked with ideas of health and strength and mysterious life-functions, and so all centring in the satisfaction of the one desire for full existence.

But complex as the quality of beauty is in the actual human figure, it is even more so in the work of plastic art. A statue which was merely an exact copy of life — a photograph in marble — would not by any means give us all

the æsthetic delight of which art is capable. In fact, it would not be art at all. It is only when the artist bodies forth some conception of his own mind that we are greatly stirred. Then, besides the immediate beauty of the melodies and harmonies of lines, and the mediate beauty, through associated ideas, of the supple and forceful forms, we have in some pathetic or heroic group in marble a world of quickened thoughts and feelings. In one of Wilhelm von Humboldt's "Letters to a Lady," he says, —

"The beauty of a work of art is, for the very reason that it is a work of art, much freer from imperfections than nature, and never excites selfish emotions. We observe it attentively, we wonder at it more and more, but we do not form any connection between it and ourselves. To the beauty of sculpture applies what Goethe has said so finely of the stars: 'We never desire the stars, although we take such pleasure in their light.'"

Now the explanation of this superiority of art to nature, æsthetically, is to be found in the fact that any personal relation to self narrows and lessens the spiritual activity. And the same explanation is applicable to the connection of æsthetic pleasures with the play impulse. For the compelling of any impulse to-

ward the accomplishment of some set purpose must confine its force. The stream of spiritual activity is controlled into some single channel, and there is no longer that free swing of all the powers which is the essence both of "play" and of æsthetic delight. In other words, if we enjoy play more than work, and art more than nature, it is because we have through their means a greater total of conscious life.

The art of tone has this advantage over the arts of painting and sculpture as the direct source of power upon the spirit, that music is a natural and universal means of expression. There can never be "symphonies of color," as has been imagined, for the reason that nowhere in the world is color naturally (as distinguished from artistically) employed to express anything. Tone, on the contrary, is universally so employed. Mr. Spencer, in his "Essay on the Origin of Music," and elsewhere, has admirably shown how this expressive use of tone runs through all the higher grades of the animal kingdom. When the dog barks or howls, and the bird pipes or complains, and the child sings or cries, it is the beginning of music. For it is the beginning of the use of tones to express feeling. Ordinary human speech is not speech alone, conveying ideas, but music as well, conveying feeling. If we listen to an animated

conversation from an adjoining room, where the articulation of words is not quite audible, we shall find that it is song, rather than speech, that we hear. The voices go up and down the gamut, the intervals and the *tempo* increasing or diminishing as the feeling changes. The *staccato*, high-keyed utterances of pleasure ; the slow, minor cadences of sorrow ; the deep monotone of determination ; the *tremolo* of passion, — all these are nothing but the song within the speech. Whenever speech ceases to convey merely cold intellectual ideas, and becomes emotional, the voice tends more and more toward song, ranging more widely through the gamut, and taking on the cadences of music proper. Perhaps even among the very elements of speech, in the vowels, namely, we have the beginnings of music as expressive of feeling. For while the consonants seem to be mere checks or interruptions of the breath, expressing the limitation of our consciousness to definite ideas, the vowels are pure tones, each having a natural pitch of its own (which one may readily detect by *whispering* them loudly), and expressing the play of feeling upon these ideas. This may possibly help to explain the ablaut, or change of vowel to express tense in the verb ; as, *sing*, *sang*, *sung*. We do not overlook the theory which explains this by the

effect of the ancient reduplication; but it sometimes happens in philology, as in society, that one cause gives rise to a form, and another makes it permanent. At any rate, the present fact is that, while the consonants remain the same in the different tenses in this example, as expressing the unchanged idea of the action, the vowels change, as the attitude or feeling of the mind toward the action changes, whether present, or just finished, or wholly past.

The reason, then, that music has a much greater direct power over the feelings than any other art is that music alone is based on a natural means of emotional expression. But its power of expression does not stop with the feelings. Inextricably bound up with every human feeling is a host of ideas associated with it in the mind, — for every feeling a host of ideas, for the reason that the possible feelings are few, while ideas are innumerable. Accordingly, music, whose power of direct expression is almost limited to the emotions, expresses different ideas to different persons, — or to ourselves at different times, — according as the particular emotion is associated in experience with one set of ideas or another. The sonata which to an Alpine goatherd would express a thunderstorm among rocky peaks to a sailor might with equal distinctness express

a tempest at sea. The larger and deeper the life experience of the listener, the more a symphony will mean to him in ideas ; or the fuller his emotional endowment, the more it will mean to him in feeling, — always provided that it is a great work, a work of genius, to which he listens. Of course much can come out of a symphony only if much originally went into it.

The secret of all art is then within the reach of our hand when we have realized one single fact concerning man. As we look out upon life we see its myriad activities all springing from certain desires. But there is one desire among them which is permanent, and paramount to all. It is not the desire for mere pleasure, for it often overrides that ; it is not the desire for mere happiness, even, for it often overrides that. It is the desire for life : not the poor negative desire to escape death and cling to existence, merely, but the aspiration for full and abounding life. To be alive in every faculty ; to have the greatest possible total of conscious being, in physical impression and effect, in intellectual force and grasp, in emotional glow, in the out-stream of the active will ; in short, completely to be and live : this is the one paramount human desire. There is only one thing we really dread ; it is death.

There is only one thing we really desire; it is life.

And now where is there to be found a perpetual source of this power and activity that we perpetually desire? Nowhere but in the expressed power and activity of other human spirits, — and that is art.

We have seen that in their very elements the arts are based on the ability to satisfy this desire. For the beauty of form consists in giving the sense of sight its greatest total of unchecked apprehension; and the beauty of tone, both in those consecutive harmonies which we call melodies and in massed harmonies, in giving the sense of hearing its greatest total of uninterrupted impression. And when we pass beyond mere sensuous delight we find the same essential effect — but on the mind now, and the whole soul — from the ideas and feelings expressed by the artist.

The test, then, for all art is that, expressing much life, it shall give much life. That painting, statue, symphony, is the greatest which adds the greatest total to our conscious existence. But we must mark well a distinction here. There are higher and lower grades or planes of existence. But by what test? By no other than this same test, — their tendency for or against renewed and increased life in

the whole nature. That pleasure is low which tends to belittle the nature; that one is high which tends to enlarge it. That art is low which only stimulates feelings and ideas most apt to brutalize; that is to say, to restrict and narrow (for that is the distinction between brute and man, — the one little, the other large, in powers and possibilities). That art is high which awakens feelings and ideas that are vital with tendencies toward more and still more of attainment and being.

And here we see the distinction between mere prettiness and genuine beauty. A patch of color on the wall may be called pretty, as pleasing the color sense alone; still more so, if it gratifies also the form sense by its outline. But it falls short of beauty because it fails to awaken in us any of the higher activities of our inner nature. Decorative art is only pretty; it touches but the surface of the mind. Decorative poetry, in the same way, suggests only pretty images of color or form. We pass along a picture-gallery, or we turn the leaves of a volume of verse. As we pause before some painting or some poem, the question is, What does this give me? It may be that it gives the imagination some pretty image of nature. This is something. It may be that it gives the feeling, also, some touch of suggested

peace or tranquillity. That is more. But if it be a great picture, or a great poem, the whole spirit in us is quickened to renewed life. Not only our sense of color and form, our perception of harmonious relations, but our interest in some crisis of human destiny, our thought concerning this, a hundred mingled streams of fancy and reflection and will impulse are set flowing in us; because all this was present in the man of genius who produced the work, and because his "expression" of it there means the carrying of it over from his spirit into ours. If it is a work of the very greatest rank, we *are* more, from that moment and forever. For out of the life the artist or the poet has given us will be born successive new accessions of life perpetually.

The art of literature is the highest of the arts because its power of expression is greatest. The effect of music may be more intense at a given moment, but its range is not so wide, nor its effect so enduring. And poetry is the highest form of the literary art, by our test, as having the fullest expressive power; since it not only expresses thought, like prose, but feeling also.

That poetry contains in itself the elements of the lower arts, a moment's reflection will show. In the first place, it contains the ele-

ments of the arts of form, of which sculpture is the purest example. For it conveys a troop of images, appealing to the inner eye, instead of the outer. In the second place, poetry contains the elements of music. For in its rhythm, its rhyme, its music of many sorts, a succession of melodies and harmonies are heard — by the inner ear, when read silently, or by the outer, when read aloud. The verse form is most fitly used, therefore, when it is used for the expression of thought and feeling together; of thought, in other words, which is aglow with feeling, and feeling which is illuminated by thought. It is equally an impertinence to use the verse form — that is, the musical form — for dry, cold ideas, or for mere vague feeling, unlighted by thought. The former is for speech unaccompanied by music; the latter is for music unaccompanied by speech. A man may say — not sing — a mathematical demonstration; he may sing — not say — an outburst of emotion. For this reason instruments are better than voices for great music. Or if the voice must be used, it is best if the words are in a foreign tongue which is unfamiliar to the listener. In this way the speech element of an opera, nearly always foolish, is concealed; and the music element, when really good, has its opportunity. It is conceivable, to be sure, that

there might be (as Wagner dreamed and seemed on the verge of accomplishing) an action so high, expressed in speech so noble and significant, that it would not belittle its accompanying music in making it limited and definite in its suggestion. A good deal of our modern verse errs in the reverse direction; that is to say, it is mere music, — flowing rhythm, and sounding rhymes, and a pretty babble of insignificant "words, words, words," — expressive, thus, of some vague atmosphere of feeling, without any thought. But this would have been more fitly expressed in music proper; it is only a part, and the lesser part of the requirement in poetry.

In illustration of the statement that poetry contains in itself the elements of the arts of form, as giving a succession of beautiful images, we may take a single passage from Longfellow's "Evangeline." Here, close together (using the poet's own words), we have the morning of June with its music and sunshine, the gleam of water, the silvery sand-bars, the dusky arch and trailing mosses of the cypress, the moonlight indistinctly gleaming through the ruined cedars, the pendulous stairs of the grapevines with hummingbirds rising and descending, the measureless prairie at night with the fireflies floating above it, the southward rivers running

to the sea side by side like the great chords of a harp in loud and solemn vibrations. Moreover, each idea brings with it to the mind a complex of associated thought and emotion, and not merely from our own individual life experience. The human race has come a long way. As we read the line in the "Lady of the Lake," —

"When danced the moon on Monan's rill,"

it is not alone the intrinsic beauty of the scene that interests us. We could imitate the effect, so far as the bodily eye is concerned, by a candle glancing on a scrap of crinkled tin. Nor is it any definite association of our own past enjoyment in connection with such a scene. There are associations — as Mr. Herbert Spencer has pointed out — too vague and dim to define; faint reverberations of whole æons of human, and perhaps of animal, experience. The deep forest was once full of the dread of unknown dangers and the expectancy of unknown delights; the shadow of the mountain had for man the chill of supernatural visitations; by the moonlit rill the savage — and, ages before, the wilder creature of the woods — sought and slew his prey, or sought and won his mate.

To illustrate the inclusion of the elements of

the art of tone, also, in poetry, we may take the same poem, "Evangeline." To begin with, the metre is music. The accents, following each other in rhythmical order, give us not only the element of time, such as a metronome would give, but a veritable tune, as well. If we recite the line, —

"When she had passed it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music,"

we find not only that it is capable of being written in bars of $\frac{3}{8}$ time, with eighth and dotted eighth and sixteenth notes, but that the accented tones are given on a different pitch, each dactyl making a cadence, or phrase, of three different tones.

These lines of English hexameter (that is, *accent* hexameter) seem to follow each other like ocean waves on the shore. The first half of the line is the wave rolling in; then it pauses, toppling into a crest, and crumbles down into foam in the last half. As we might represent it, —

"Rolling, then rearing its crest, and foaming and falling in thunder."

So wave after wave of the sonorous verse rolls in, timing itself (as Dr. Holmes suggests of another metre) to the very ebb and flow of our blood and our breathing: a phrase to each pulse-beat, and a line to each breath.

The rhyme system of verse, again, is entirely music. There are three sets of rhymes, in reality: the initial, or consonant rhyme (or alliteration); the medial rhyme, or chime of the vowels in the interior of the words; and the final rhyme. We may note, first of all, that as in rhythm, so in rhyme, we have the principle that lies at the foundation of music, — unity in variety; the greatest total of conscious impression being received through chords, — that is, through a variety of tones made possible to apprehend by their relations of agreement, or unity. If we take the old couplet (which is truly poetry, too, as being wise as well as musical), —

> "Love me little, love me long,
> Is the burden of my song,"

we notice first, as most obvious, the final rhyme. The books define rhyme badly, as being the agreement between two sounds. That really makes but half a rhyme. We must have the difference, as well as the agreement; the variety, as well as the unity. In other words, *ong* and *ong*, in this example, are not rhymes: they are identical sounds; they constitute a unison, not a harmony. But *long* and *song* are rhymes, since now a different consonant precedes each.

The initial rhyme involves the same principle, only reversed; the unity being now in

the consonants, the variety in the following sounds. The important part which this initial rhyme plays in verse is often overlooked, from the circumstance that the alliteration is so commonly concealed; as in this line: —

"He was already at rest, and she longed to slumber beside him."

The *r* of *rest* rhymes with the *r* of *already*, the *l* of *slumber* with the *l* of *longed*, and the *s* of *beside* with the *s* of *slumber*, though all these are concealed to the eye by not being visibly initial letters. This consonant rhyme, by the way, addresses the mind as well as the ear (as might be expected from the more intellectual character of the consonants); the alliteration in good verse always striking the emphatic syllable, and (as Mr. John Earle neatly expresses it) marking out to the mind "the crests of the thought," as in the line just quoted.

The medial rhyme, or chime of interior vowels, also plays a concealed part in the music of the best verse. Taking again the couplet, "Love me little," etc., if we utter the vowels alone we shall hear their chime. Moreover, since each vowel has a natural pitch of its own, by whispering the vowels in these lines vigorously, we shall hear a distinct tune of different notes, which might be written upon a staff in musical notation.

The best verse in which to study these various musical elements is that of Mother Goose. And this for two reasons: first, because it is a kind of profanation to make a *corpus vilum* of good poetry for dissection; and secondly because the lines of Mother Goose have been preserved purely on account of this very perfection of musical form, having had no other, or little other, *raison d'être.* Out of thousands of jingles repeated to children, the fittest only have survived, and these are, accordingly, very perfect specimens so far as the outer shell of poetry is concerned. A college class, for example, in studying verse with a thoroughly scientific analysis, could not do better than to provide themselves with copies of this immortal bard for class-room use. If one were to exhaust completely the possibilities of analysis of, say, this quatrain,

> "Old King Cole was a jolly old soul,
> And a jolly old soul was he;.
> He called for his pipe, and he called for his bowl,
> And he called for his fiddlers three,"

he would know a great deal about the very imperfectly understood science of English verse.[1]

[1] The work of Sidney Lanier on English verse may be recommended as the only one that has ever made any approach to a rational view of the subject. Nor are the standard ones overlooked in making this assertion.

But a genuine poem, while containing (by its images to the inner eye, and its music to the inner ear) these elements of the lower arts, goes beyond them in expressing more fully than any other form has been found able to do the soul of the writer to the soul of the reader. In this way it stands as the highest species of its own — which is the highest — genus, the art of literature. And the other — the prose — forms of literature must be ranked precisely according to this power of expressiveness.

We might draw off in a tabular scheme the different forms of literature, classified on this basis. At the bottom we should have those written works which are books, indeed, but not yet literature; as the almanac, the arithmetic, the receipt-book, the text-book on natural science. These, and a vast number of others, do not belong to the art of literature, or to literature proper, simply because they do not express the writer, and therefore have no power (to come back to our test of criticism) to stir or quicken the reader. They are merely fact-books. Rising a little higher in our table of forms, we may put down certain books which, though still fact-books, begin to convey something also of the observer's own personality. Such are certain books of travel, or of the higher natural science. They begin to be literature,

because they begin to be humanly expressive. A little higher in our tabular scheme will come books of human science, wherein the writer is more apt to give something of himself (not narrowly, as an individual, but as one representing universal human nature) together with his objective results. Especially is this true as we rise into the region of the profounder human problems, where our books are fact-books, to be sure, but the "facts" are now of such breadth and importance that we incline rather to call them "truths."

More and more fitly may those works be called truth-books as we rise to the region of literature proper. Here, also, we classify and rank according to expressive power. The essay expresses more than the history, because the writer is more free to reveal his own inner life in his work; and it contributes to us, of course, just in proportion to what it takes from him. The more life goes in, the more life comes out. And above the essay ranks fiction, on this same ground. And among the different forms of fiction the novel stands the highest, as being the epitome, not only of what the writer has seen, but of what the writer has lived and been and now is. Highest of all, as we have said, is the poem; because here the writer felt the most freedom, and could therefore exert the

most power. Keble was perhaps the first to point out that the verse form is not only a concealer, but a revealer. That is to say, it reveals just *because* the writer felt that he was concealed. The mask becomes itself the most transparent sort of window.

And which form of poetry shall we set highest by our test, — the narrative, the dramatic, or the lyric?

We may be helped to answer this by observing a fact, which is either a mere coincidence, or goes far to corroborate our view of the true basis of our valuation of literature. It is the fact that just in proportion with the increase of expressive power, in our tabulated scheme of literary forms, goes also an increase in permanence of value in the world. The mere fact-books are superseded, and become valueless. The truth-books become more and more of permanent value as we rise to their higher regions. And we are most apt to find that the thing that has survived time and storm in the world's shifting history is some frail bit of a lyric poem; because this holds in its crystalline heart the life of a man; and when we are dead — or half dead — spiritually, out breaks again from the heart of the crystal that spark of abounding life which is the thing that of all others we desire.

When a mind expresses in a book its mere perception of some external object, it is not yet literature. Before the same object every one's perception, if normal, would be the same. The expression of it in writing can add nothing to our inner life beyond what the object itself would add.[1] It is only when the writer, like the coral insect, builds himself into his work, expressing inner states of thought, feeling, or purpose, either of his own individuality or, best of all, of the universal human being, that the book becomes literature. Literature, for this reason, always has a "style:" an expression characteristic of the man, the reflex of something his own; *through* which, at least, the truth — however universal — had to pass. As in other arts, if a painter exactly represented an actual laughing child, or if a musician exactly copied the wailing of a hurt child, it would not yet be art, for it would convey nothing to us beyond what the external object itself would convey; so in literature, if a poet

[1] This bears on the question of the comparative values of natural science and the humanities in education. A fish in a book can be expected to go no farther toward educating a mind than a fish in a pool. It can stimulate observation, and attract a dormant attention, and reveal many interesting facts about the non-human world, but that is all. Whereas a man's life in a book can renew and increase the whole intellectual and spiritual life.

exactly paints in words a white rose, it may be very pretty, but it is not yet a genuine poem. But let him give us the rose, plus his feeling and thought about it, — sincerely his, but based on what is ours also, and man's universally, — and it is a poem. Or let it be a fact instead of an object, — say, the falling of an apple to the ground in a garden. When a writer describes it just as it is, and nothing beyond it, we say it is a "fact" that the apple falls. When he gives it to us plus some activity of his reason which links it with the revolving moon, expressing now the law of universal gravitation, we say it is a great "truth." And if, in its expression, he adds also the free play of his own mind and feeling upon it, he may give us a work of pure literature; perhaps — most likely in this case — a lyric poem.

The secret of all art, then, is simply this open secret: that it is the giver of what we most of all desire, abounding life. It draws upon an inexhaustible supply. For it is not merely the artist's own individual spirit which is imparted to us; the greater the genius, the more deeply his fountain drinks of the tides of the common humanity. And it is genius alone that knows to stir in us those truths, emotions, impulses, that are wrought into our inmost being by the long race experience. We

are seldom thoroughly awake and alive. Like the little fitful spire of violet flame that we sometimes see hovering and playing over the surface of a coal fire, so our consciousness plays about the different tracts of the otherwise dormant mind: now here, now there; now sensation, now memory, now one or another of the emotions, starts for the instant into fluttering life, then darkens back into unconsciousness. What we desire is the glow and illumination of the whole spirit; and it is art, and especially the literary art, that best ministers to this desire.

It is not enough that a picture or a novel or a poem should move us: the question is, *What* does it move in us? How much of the whole possible range of our inner life does it awaken? Nor is mere intensity of impression any sufficient test. For one must inquire, Whither does this tend, — toward further renewal of full existence, or toward reaction and stagnation? Some feelings are kindled only to smoulder away and leave dead ashes on an empty hearth within the spirit; others tend to kindle on and on, awakening thought, rousing to vigorous action. Nor are the most easily moved activities always the most important ones in the effect of art and literature. Laughter and tears lie on the surface of the mind:

the gleam and the dusk may interchange quickly at any passing cloud. It is the great motive powers deep down in the soul that most contribute to abounding life, and whose awakening most surely proves the presence of genius: the sense of right and justice; the feelings of pity, awe, aspiration; love, too, — not the sodden sort of love, which is dear to the decorative poets in their maudlin moods, but mother-love, and father-love, and *menschen-liebe*, and love of friend, and lover's love, that desires not selfish possession, but the infinite welfare of its object, and for this will die or will live.

The test, then, for literature, as for all art, is its life-giving power. In the essay, for example, perfection would consist in giving us, through that free and unpremeditated play of the whole bevy of spiritual faculties (which is the characteristic of this literary form), the widest excursions possible to the mind's lighter and leisure hours. In the novel, it would consist in imparting to us profound life-truths, pure emotions, noble intentions, in connection with the opportunity to re-live, or live in imagination, the most significant experiences of human existence. In the poem, the requirement is that it shall be full of lovely images, that it shall be in every way musical, that it

shall bring about us troops of high and pure associations, — the very words so chosen that they come "trailing clouds of glory" in their suggestiveness; and in its matter, that it shall bring us both thought and feeling, for whose intermingling the musical form of speech alone is fitted; and that, coming from a pure and rich nature, it shall leave us purer and richer than it found us.

Wordsworth said a profound thing, and said it very simply, as he knew how to do, when he gave as the criterion of a book that "it should make us wiser, better, or happier." And if it be the greatest sort of book, will it not do all three?

A PRIVATE LETTER

Berkeley, August 21, 1880.

My dear Fellow Being (for really that is the only relation that gives me any right to address you), — I was reading a story of yours the other day in a certain magazine, and was struck by a little mistake in grammar that you contrived to repeat a good many times. I knew you were a young writer, and it was plain that you were one of great promise; and it seemed to me a pity that a pen capable of such touches of the genuine literary power should slip into bad English, especially into a mistake so uninterestingly common, so newspapery, as it were, — a sin without any tang of eccentricity to spice it. Of course I feel a painful delicacy in convicting you of bad grammar, and I could n't think of speaking to you publicly about it. I would n't for the world have anybody know I meant you, not even yourself — for certain. That is why I write thus privately to you about it. Not that mistakes in grammar are such blood-curdling things, in themselves, but there is this harm in them: they

catch the attention and so distract one's mind from the real matter in hand. Have you ever noticed how, when the eloquent B-an-rges is preaching, sometimes in the most impressive passage an unfortunate mispronunciation hits your ear and throws the whole train of thought and emotion off the track? Just so, my dear friend (for I begin to feel very good-natured to you now that I am in the way of being abusive — there is a great deal of human-nature in people), when I was reading your charming story, just as my feelings were beginning to kindle in that passage, you know, where — for the first time — with — suddenly this grammatical blunder exploded under my rapt attention with a bang, and scattered my emotional tension to the winds.

Besides, there is the terrible *inference*. Don't you know how a bad slip in the refinements of English syntax, coming from some newly introduced person, and coming, too, with the fatal smoothness of habitual use, opens up to you in a second whole vistas of inference and of undesirable probabilities for an acquaintance? Just so you will be sending a manuscript some day to the Coastian, or the Scribbler's Magazine, or the Ocean Monthly; and the editor will pick it up from a two-bushel basket of such, and his eye, flaming with the preternatural fires

of haste and intellect, will snatch at a page or two of your trembling and otherwise innocent darling, and will pounce on this identical solecism. It will be enough for him; for the power of inference must needs be swift and savage in a hurried editor in prolific literary regions.

But you are impatient to know what all this is about. It is about the improper use, yea, the inveterate snarling up and inextricable entanglement of the uses of *shall* and *will*, *should* and *would*. "Oh," you say, "is that all! Why, everybody makes mistakes in *them*." No, in fact, not everybody. You will find that our best writers never use these little auxiliaries improperly. Indeed, it is the absolutely perfect discrimination between such words, the subtle sense of the least delicate flavor or ethereal aroma of difference between such impalpable significations, that gives one charm to their style. I admit, on the other hand, that occasionally the particular auxiliaries in question are maltreated by otherwise respectable writers. It is, in fact, an Hibernicism that has crept into use, in this country particularly. But it will be well for you and me to remember that only old and successful authors can afford to write badly.

Suppose, then, that once for all we look into this matter, and know the rights of these four

small words. It is not difficult, but it will require a bit of research into English grammar. You hate grammar, I suppose? That is right. I never knew any one to love it: at least the thing that goes under that name in the schools. Of course no one can help liking the real study of grammar, the science of the subtlest workings of the human mind dealing with the symbols of expression; but few schoolboys ever get a taste of that. They are dragged by the ear through such text-books as that of G—ld Br—n, and forever after hate every person and everything that was ever associated with the subject, — the desk at which they recited it, and the smell of the particular flower that came in at the window where they tried to learn it, and the teacher that drove them mad with the reiteration of its meaningless maunderings. You will hardly believe it, but there really are, though, of late, several grammars written by scholars, intelligible, sensible, delightful books. (Of course the School Boards have not introduced them: they only consider the bindings of books and their relative cheapness.) Such, for instance, are Professor Whitney's "Essentials of English Grammar" and Professor Bain's "Higher Grammar."

We will begin, then, by trying to forget all about the "potential mood" and other devices

of Satan, found in the ordinary grammars, and go back to the origin of these four little "useful troubles," *shall* and *should*, *will* and *would*. You know that a thousand years ago, in good King Alfred's time, the English people spoke our mother tongue in the form which we now call Anglo-Saxon, but which they themselves always called "Englisc,"—"English," as it really was, only without the later accessions from the French, Latin, etc. In this original form of English the primitive verb had (besides our familiar imperative, infinitive, and participle) only two moods: the indicative, to express a *fact* (as, "*I was there*"); and the conditional (or subjunctive), to express an *idea* of a fact, merely conceived in the mind (as, "*if I were there*"). In the indicative, or fact mood, the tenses (there were only two, present and past; as, *am* and *was*) meant time; in the subjunctive, or idea mood (since mere mental conceptions are not tied up to time), they only meant different relations of doubtfulness (as, "*if ever I be a king*," or, "*if I were king at any time*"). Take, for example, the statement of fact, "*it is wrong;*" this is the indicative mood, and the present tense means present time, to-day. Or, "*if it is wrong*, he is not aware of it;" this, also, is the indicative mood, in spite of the "*if*," because, although we do not assert it as

a fact, we assume it to be a fact, for the time being, as you see by the conclusion; and accordingly the present tense means present time, as before. But suppose we say, "*if it be wrong*, he will not do it." This, you see, is the subjunctive mood, expressing a mere idea, as being possibly true; and the present tense does not mean time (it is future time, if anything), but mere contingency. Again, take the statement, "*he was wrong;*" it is indicative mood, stating a fact, and the past tense means past time, yesterday. Or, "*if he was wrong*, he has probably discovered it;" this, also, is the indicative mood, in spite of the "*if*," because we assume the fact to exist, as the conclusion shows; and accordingly the past tense means past time. But suppose we say, "*even if he were wrong*, he would not discover it." This, plainly, is the subjunctive mood, expressing a mere supposition; and the past tense does not mean past time — indeed, it may refer to any other time whatever except the past. What, then, does it mean? Do you not see that it means to throw the idea still farther away from reality than the present tense would do, implying that, while his being wrong is a supposition, it is an improbable supposition? And what more suitable for this meaning than to push it back into the past, where there can be

no "if" or peradventure about things at all; where (as an old saying runs) "'t is as 't is, and 't can't be any 't is-er."

At this point, my dear young novelist (for that is what you are coming to, if the fates permit), you are beginning to suspect that you have been basely deceived. You began to read my letter with the alluring expectation of something genial if not absolutely frolicsome, and here we are in the thorny wilderness of — (we will not speak the loathed word) — the study that "teaches the art of speaking and writing the English language correctly." (As if it really ever did that! When everybody knows that *that* art, if learned at all, is learned at the breakfast-table, and the mother's knee, and what we Californians still, by poetic license, call the "fireside." Then, what is the use of all this long —— ——? (Yes, I know you are calling it that.) Because there are really a few idioms in our much Hibernicized, and Scotticized, and Gallicized, and Missouriated, and Downeastercized mother tongue that cannot be known with perfect confidence without going to the very roots of the matter.)

Know, then, that *shall* and *will* were two Anglo-Saxon verbs (*shall* being of the form *sceal*, just as our word *ship* was originally *scip*, with the *c* pronounced as *k*). These were not

auxiliary verbs, but genuine independent verbs; "*ic wille*" meaning "*I wish*," or "*I determine*," and "*ic sceal*" meaning "*I owe*," or "*I ought*." In the Anglo-Saxon version of the Parable of the Unjust Steward, the question, "*How much owest thou?*" is rendered "*Hû micel scealt thû?*" This signification lasted to Chaucer's time, who writes, "that faith I *shall* to God." And Mr. Earle (in his "Philology of the English Tongue") says that in one of the old country dialects a child would still say, if asked to run of an errand, "I will if I shall;" i. e. "I am willing to if I ought to."

These two verbs, to *shall* and to *will*, naturally came to be used very often with the infinitive mood (i. e. the noun form) of other verbs, this infinitive being the object of the mental act of *shalling* or *willing* (owing or wishing). For example, "*ic wille leornian Englisc*" meant "*I will to learn* (or, I will the learning of) *English*." Just so with *shall*; "*ic sceal leornian*" meant "*I owe the learning*," or, "*I ought the to-learn*."

You see, therefore, the fundamental distinction between these two words (and it governs every case of their apparently arbitrary use). *Shalling* involves the idea of influence or pressure or obligation, from without; *willing* involves the idea of self-determination, from

within. This would be, if possible, still more evident, if I dared to ask you to plunge one fathom deeper into the inky sea of historical grammar; for the oracles of these abysmal regions tell us that the present *shall* is itself the past tense of an original old fossil verb *sculan*, meaning "to get in debt." (Grimm says, from an ancient present with the meaning "to kill;" the past tense meaning, therefore, "I have killed, and have to pay the legal fine.") The past tense signified, then, "I have got in debt," i. e. "I am under the pressure of an external obligation," or, "I owe." You perceive, now, the absurdity in the Hibernicism, "I will be obliged to refuse your request;" for this means, "I wish, or will, to be obliged to refuse it." What we desire to express is our being under the outside pressure of circumstances; so we say, properly, "I *shall* be obliged."

But, you understand, in such an example as this last, where hardly anything but mere futurity is expressed, we are outrunning the Anglo-Saxon usage. It was only in later times that this grew up. You can see how, since willing to do an act, and feeling a pressure to do an act, are both likely to result in the future doing of it, there would come about a habit of expressing mere future expectation by these com-

binations. And it soon came to be felt as an instinct of courtesy, in expressing a future act, to speak humbly in the first person, as if about to do it because of outside pressure, — "I shall do it," while the second and third persons are politely represented as doing it of their own free will, — "you will," or "he will," do it. For instance, "I shall pay my just debts" is as if one said, "not that it 's any virtue in me, but I must;" while "you will pay your just debts," implies that of course you wish to, and would, whether compelled or not.

There are two apparent exceptions, but they are really only further illustrations of this original meaning of the words: in the interrogative form, we use "*shall*" for the second person, because "*will*" would ask for consent or a promise; and in quotation we use "*shall*" for all persons, because the person is represented as speaking and saying, in the first person, "I shall."

So much for expressing mere futurity; but of course where determination is to be expressed, the case is just reversed. Here the first person says, "I *will*," and the second and third are represented as dominated by this outside determination, — "you *shall* do it," "he *shall* do it." (By the way, the phrase, "I *won't*" is such an exceedingly valuable one,

morally, that it is worth noting here that this is an abbreviation of a good old form, "I wol not.")

And now shall we briefly explore the matter of "should" and "would"? For to tell the truth, since this is a strictly private letter, and you don't even know that it is you I am talking to, one may frankly say that in their usage, also, there were grievous wrongs.

Mark you, then, this same "shall" had in Anglo-Saxon a past tense "*sceolde*," *should*; and "will" had a past tense "*wolde*," *would*. These, also, were at first not auxiliaries, but independent verbs, and meant as thus: "*ic sceolde leornian*," "I owed it (yesterday) to learn;" "*ic wolde leornian*," "I willed the learning of it." The same forms were used in the past tense (so-called) of the subjunctive, but here was expressed not a fact, but the mere mental idea of a fact; and the past tense meant not past time (future, rather if anything), but doubtfulness. And soon, just as *shalling* and *willing* lost much of their independent meaning, and came to express mere futurity, so *shoulding* and *woulding* came to express merely doubtful or conditional futurity, and were used with other verbs as auxiliaries. The *indicative* past was lost, except in the single case of a statement like this: "He tried

to prevent me, but *I would do it*" — where the past tense means past time, and the verb carries its original meaning. But the *subjunctive* past is the one we use so commonly and sometimes misuse so innocently. It occurs in conditional sentences, and the usage is different in the two clauses. For example, "If he should come, I should go." In the condition clause, the usage requires "*should*" for all persons; in the conclusion clause, it requires "*should*" for the first person, "*would*" for the second and third. That is to say, for any given person the same verb is used, in the present to express fact futurity ("*I shall go, you will go, he will go*"), and in the past to express doubtful futurity ("If it happened, *I should go, you would go, he would go*"). The same reasons of courtesy apply to the distinction of persons, as in the case of *shall* and *will*.

Here, also, there are two apparent exceptions: 1. We say, "I would if I were you," or, "I would n't do that," using "*would*" instead of "*should*," because a flavor of its original meaning is what we require here, namely, wish or preference. And we say, "I would like to help you," using "*would*" instead of "*should*" for the same reason; for we mean, "I should wish (to like) to help you (if there were any use of wishing)." Just so we say, "I would

he were here," which differs from "I wish he were here" only as being subjunctive (shown by the fact that the past tense does not mean past time), and so expressing only a mere idea of wishing, like "I could wish he were here (if there were any use in it)." 2. We say, "You (or he) *should* do it," meaning "You ought to." Here, also, the original meaning of the word is introduced. Only one would expect the present tense "*shall;*" but this had already been appropriated for the future. Besides, there seems to be an instinct to throw this idea into the subjunctive *past* (or past of unreality and timelessness), as we see by the equivalent expression "he *ought*" (which is the past of "*owe*"); or, better still, by a colloquialism which pushes the idea still farther off into the past-past, or pluperfect, notwithstanding that the thought is still, if of any time at all, of *future* time, — "*he 'd* (he had) *ought 'o do it.*"

But at this point you will doubtless throw down this unoffending screed, with the ejaculation that you knew *something* about it before, but now you are *all* at sea. Well, that is the danger of a little knowledge. But, my dear friend, if you will go carefully through Professor March's Anglo-Saxon and Comparative Grammar, and Professor Bain's Higher and his Composition Grammar, following them up

with Professor Lounsbury's "History of the English Language," and will then confine your light reading for a year to the very best authors, rigorously eschewing all newspapers (except that exceedingly cultured and intellectual one whose editors may happen to be reading this remark), I promise you that you will then begin to be ready to enjoy entering on the study of these things.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, in a practical table (and, now I think of it, you might skip what you have read up to this point, and begin here).

For expressing mere futurity (the plural in all cases like the singular): —

I shall,
You will,
He will.

For interrogation as to mere futurity: —

[Am I going to?]
Shall you?
Will he?

For expressing determination: —

I will,
You shall,
He shall.

For expressing doubtful or conditional ideas (future or timeless), in the condition: —

If I should,
If you should,
If he should.

In the conclusion : —

I should,
You would,
He would.

For expressing wish or willingness or preference, in this softened, semi-conditional form : —

I would (if I were you),
I would (like to do it),
I would (he were here).

For expressing duty or obligation : —

I should (study, but don't want to),
You should,
He should.

Meantime, my dear young author, "*quid refert Caio utrum*," etc., that is to say, what difference does it make to Genius whether it speak precisely in the tongue of common mortals? I know that, in point of fact, you will always enjoy writing, and I shall always enjoy reading your stories ; indeed, you *shall* go on writing them, and I *will* go on reading them, even though you should not use "would" as you should, or as you would if you should use "would" and "should" as Shakespeare or Mr. Matthew Arnold would.

Music

MANAGEMENT OF THE MIND WHILE HEARING MUSIC

WHAT is the best thing to do with the mind when listening to music? "Do nothing with it," some one may reply; "let it take care of itself." But this implies a mistaken idea as to its ways. It seldom does, in point of fact, take care of itself. It is bound to follow the successive suggestions either of certain outside impressions, or of certain inner impressions which also had originally an external source. One may as well choose a little among these. Surely we might better direct the mental panorama by some voluntary choice than to have it directed by the accidental sight of a grotesque face in the audience, or the odd bowing of some one of the second violins. Does it make the sailing of a summer sea any the less idly luxurious to touch the helm lightly from time to time?

Now there are several ways open to choice in the management of the mind's delicate

steering apparatus, on such an occasion as the hearing of fine music. The worst way, no doubt, is to gaze fixedly at the performers, and so let the eye cheat the ear out of half its enjoyment. This is the besetting temptation of the "distinguished amateur," who is inclined to give his whole attention to the visible handling of whatever instrument he himself may happen to play. At a recent concert I noticed that my neighbor riveted his interest, during a whole splendid movement of the symphony, on the agile gymnastics of one of the double-basses. But this is not so ill-advised as the trick some people have of staring at a singer, and even with an opera-glass, during a whole song. What can they carry away in the memory but a visual image of a wonderful openness of countenance, a kind of labio-dental display?

I have always liked to close my eyes during any passage of orchestral music to which I wished to lend special attention. It is surprising what sensitiveness and grasp this instantly gives to the auditory power. Sometimes, in a dark corner under the gallery, one may indulge himself in the luxury. But on Kant's immortal doctrine that one should do only those things which all may do, this closing of the eyes at a concert hardly seems proper in the body of the house. Would it not look

queer if we all sat that way? ("Look queer to whom, if everybody's eyes were shut?" Well, to the gentlemanly ushers; and the reporters, whose eyes are always open; and the cornet and the bassoon, in their lucid intervals.) It is not necessary, however, actually to close the outward eye. We may select some peg on which to hang it, so to speak, where no distracting image will interrupt our reverie. The middle of the back of some quiet person in front of us will generally do. Or we may happen to have that convenient faculty, possessed by so many, of fixing the bodily eye on a given point, while the mind's eye is gradually withdrawn leagues and leagues behind it.

There are two opposite ways, in particular, open to the mind for its excursions during music. It may either let itself become engaged in dreams of one's own personal destiny, memories of the past, fantastically intermingled, or dreams of "what hath never been, and what can never be;" or it may go out of itself into the life-dramas of others. Which is the better way? For example, in listening to one of those orchestral duets of Rubinstein's, one may either disregard the composer's indication in the title, weaving his own personal episodes at will from the changes of the chords; or he may occupy his imagination with the relations

of the suggested Toreador and Andalouse; or he may hear only the far-off voices of well-known mortals and their perplexing fates; or, finally, the music may but breathe an ethereal essence of human life universal, too elusive for any individual incarnation. The question is like that which confronts the poet: Shall he sing his own joys and woes, or shall he create exterior dramatic idyls? Shall he follow the method of Byron or of Browning?

"I am never merry," said Jessica, "when I hear sweet music;" and her Lorenzo was no philosopher, and could give but the shallowest explanation of the fact. Rossetti's "Monochord," if she could have waited so long for it, might have helped her to a better one: —

"Is it the moved air or the moving sound
That is Life's self and draws my life from me,
. . . . . .
That 'mid the tide of all emergency
Now notes my separate wave, and to what sea
Its difficult eddies labor in the ground?

"*Oh! what is this that knows the road I came,*
The flame turned cloud, the cloud returned to flame,
The lifted shifted steeps and all the way?"

No doubt it is the first instinct, with all of us, to let the "eternal passion, eternal pain," of great orchestral music interweave themselves

with the past, the possible, or, more often, the dear impossible, of our personal life-story. We are, for the time being, subjects of what Rossetti has noted, in his own private copy of the poem from which I have just quoted, as "that sublimated mood of the soul in which a separate essence of itself seems, as it were, to oversoar and survey it." But would it not be nobler in the soul if its survey were wider? Would it not be better for the will, in its renunciation and vows of service, that these inchoate worlds of musical harmony, these swaying tides of mysteriously organizing sound, an audible chaos of multitudinous emotions over which a creative breath is hovering and calling life, with all its tragedies and comedies, into being, should be identified to the imagination with the fates of other men than ourselves?

There are persons, I am beginning to discover, who have but a very imperfect power of visual imagination. An intimate friend writes me, after only three years of separation, "I have completely forgotten you. Or, rather, I remember nothing *but* you, and not at all your outward aspect. Face, form, manner, have altogether faded, and cannot by any effort of will be recalled." But I can shut my eyes and see this friend — form, features, color, a hundred particular ways of gesture and manner — more

distinctly than any photograph could possibly present him. I could draw his profile on this paper; not composing it, but simply tracing it from my mental image, as if it were a silhouette laid down and followed mechanically with the pencil.

Those of us who possess this common enough power might at least always give some fitting *mise en scène* to a symphony, removing it from its incongruous situation in an ugly hall packed with monotonous rows of frivolous bonnets and sand-papered heads. We do not need Wagner's aid to obliterate the musicians and fill the stage with impressive scenery. In a moment, at will, we are reclining in a stately pine forest on a solitary mountain-side. Behind us tower great crags with fluted columnar front, like nature's organ-pipes. Below and to the left hollows a piny gorge, blue with misty depth, up whose slope, from round the mountain's enormous flank, swells the sound of falling torrents. Beyond the granite ridge to the right goes down a broken footpath to a hidden valley, where some momentous human passion play begins now to be enacted.

Or we are drifting on the ocean, and a storm is subsiding. All night we have driven before the tempest, and now at the first glimmer of dawn we strain our sight into the darkness,

and listen for the roar of breakers. Suddenly the sound of all sweet and powerful instruments rises and mingles as if from the very depths of the rolling sea. Have the forces of nature become audible in their battling together? Or have we drifted into the midst of a strife of mortal destinies, and is this the prelude to a mighty drama of the nations on the shores of some new world?

CAN TUNES BE INHERITED?

I AM not a musician professionally, or in any strict sense of the word; but I am fond of music, and, having a correct ear and some facility of touch, I have played on a good many instruments without acquiring much skill with any one of them. One musical endowment there is which might have been strong in me, if it had ever received any proper cultivation: it is the power of composing tunes, of improvisation, on a very limited and unimpressive scale. Tunes make themselves in my head, — such as they are. When I "whistle as I go, for want of thought," it is neither classical nor popular music, but such as makes itself as it goes along. It is very indifferent whistling, considered from the point of view of the "distinguished amateur" whistler, but unconsciously the tune, if "a poor thing, sir," is nearly always "my own."

All this personality only by way of prelude to a curious fact. From about the age of twenty I have found more and more frequently coming into my mind a peculiar sort of tune;

a queer minor melody, like the Scotch, and yet not like the Scotch. Its angular yet taking wildness is more like the Irish tunes that one occasionally hears a genuine native Irish girl singing, or half humming, with unconscious pauses and sudden *crescendos* that follow the vicissitudes of her work. This habitual presentation in the mind of these broken, wavering melodies, always on a half-fierce and half-pathetic minor key, had continued for some ten years when I made my first acquaintance, by chance, with the folk-music of the Welsh. It was on a Cunarder in mid-ocean, on the voyage to Liverpool. One evening I was loitering up and down the deck in the warm moonlight, when a group of steerage passengers, sitting or reclining about the foot of the foremast, began to sing in a low and half-unconscious strain in the midst of their talk. They were, it seems, Welsh people, who were choosing this particular time to revisit the fatherland because of an approaching *Eisteddfod*, somewhere in South Wales. It was, I perceived instantly, the "music of my dreams." To the best of my knowledge and belief, I had never heard these tunes, or any such tunes, sung, whistled, or played anywhere before. It had so happened that I had never lived in or near any Welsh settlements. I had never chanced to make the

acquaintance of so much as one solitary Welsh person, so far as I know. Yet here, sung by these returning Cymric exiles in the yellow moonlight, as we rose and fell on the gently heaving waves, — here were the very strains that had for years been floating, unbidden and recognized, through my brain. I do not mean to say that the precise phrases and cadences were here. But the character, the musical moods and tenses, the tone-color, were the same.

My explanation of the fact is simple, but to most will probably be incredible. I have Welsh blood in my family, far back on my mother's side. By some freak of heredity the music of my Welsh ancestors has come down through six, eight, or ten generations, as a dormant germ, and come to life again — a dim, somnolent, imperfect life, to be sure — in a corner of my brain. I could almost fancy (though this I do not soberly believe, for it is explicable in other ways) that there has come down with it a visual picture of wild torchlight marchings and countermarchings in savage Welsh glens. So plainly do I see in my brain, ever since that night on the steamer, and especially ever since the corroboration of that instantaneous recognition through a collection of Cymric songs which I afterward obtained, visions that

befit this strange, barbaric music. I see mountain gorges at night, black-clad in stunted and leaning trees, under a wild sky, where an unshapely waning moon dives among scudding rags of storm. Winding along the pass comes a procession of my Keltic ancestors: it is a burial, or some savage midnight gathering against the Saxon invader. Red torches flare in the midst of their flying smoke; some indistinct dark mass is borne among the leaders; and now and again there are metallic gleams along the vanishing line. They are small, dark men, half clothed in skins of beasts, and their wild eyes shine under streaming locks of black hair. A mountain stream beside them flashes its white bursts of foam out of the darkness under the crags, and continually there rises and mingles with its roar that fierce yet woeful music, half shouted and half sung.

Psychology and Ethics

INDIVIDUAL CONTINUITY

THE continuity of our lives is not so great as we are apt to suppose. We have in youth a vivid sense of our continuous individuality, and we take it for granted that it will always be so with us. Thus we hear with some incredulity the anecdotes of eminent men who have completely lost the recollection of certain things done, said, or written in early life, and, what is more, all interest in them, or desire to remember them. That Lowell can have forgotten, as the itemizer says, that he was once a contributor to the "Dial" seems incredible to a college Junior of my acquaintance. *He* has never forgotten anything he has written! In like manner, to have a bosom friend at fourteen, and come to care next to nothing about him at forty, appears to the boy a shocking piece of treason. Little he knows how many breaks are likely to occur in the succession of his life-phases; and how many times the winged creature will lightly

slip his feet out of the chrysalis shell, carrying only some invisible thread of half-memory over from one epoch into the other.

No doubt there are lives that do go on with comparatively unbroken coherence, — tranquil, rustic, or village lives, whose sun always rises over the same horizon, and whose radii of interests, from year to year, go out to the same unchanged circumference. Here the constantly overlapping continuity of the neighborhood existence helps to keep the man's own thread of personality unbroken. But when we once cut loose from geography, make friends and break with friends, become the very opposite of "Bourbons" in that we are always "learning" and always "forgetting," then how far backward over our days can the uninterrupted "I" be fairly said to extend? When

> "some divinely gifted man,
> Whose life in low estate began
> And on a simple village green,"

at last "breaks his birth's invidious bar," and passes on to new desires, new opinions, at last a whole background of new memories, even, can it any longer be said to have been really *he* who

> "played at councilors and kings
> With one that was his earliest mate,

> Who ploughs with pain his native lea,
> And reaps the labor of his hands,
> Or in the furrow musing stands:
> 'Does my old friend remember me'"?

In the early summer morning I see what appears to be a long silver line bending and glancing in the air between the fir and the apple-tree. But when I look closely, it proves to be a succession of infinitesimal globules of gray dew, strung on an invisible spider-line. Is our personality such a succession of separately sphered moments or hours? And what is the continuous line on which they are threaded? With one, it may be some persistent purpose, — an ambition or a passion; with another, the abnegation of an ambition or a passion, or some inveterate trouble that is the last to look in on him at night and the first in the morning, and by means of which he has no difficulty in self-recognition.

It is perhaps a mere fancy that mirrors have something to do with the distinct and ever-present sense of our own identity. If a man had never looked at himself in a glass, and so had no clear mental image of how he looked yesterday, and the day before, and a year ago, would he, for example, feel so intensely as now this irrational need of being consistent with his own past? It is not merely that we "cannot

escape from our grandfathers;" but we cannot escape, either, from our own last year. Was the primitive man, unsophisticated by French plate mirrors, freer for new growths? Or did even Adam contemplate his aboriginal countenance in some smooth inlet of the river Pison, and so acquire an obstinate sense of responsibility for his earliest Adamite impressions?

And (while we are speculating a little freely) shall we go to the length of saying that possibly the mere accident of clothing counts for something in the case? It may then be safest that a man renew his garments only piecemeal; or, if he assume a complete new suit at a time, let him retire often into the linking familiarity of the second-best. With no mirror-image and no reminder from wonted clothes, would not a man sometimes need the evidence of "the little dog at home, and he knows me," to be sure that "I be as I think I be"? It may well be doubted whether all of us have positive individuality enough to hold the steady recognition of even our nearest relatives, without the visible tag of some familiar cut or color of garment, or, at least, of that innermost garb or mask which is the bodily face and form itself.

How much, moreover, has the mere circumstance of our always carrying the same name to do with our sense of continuity? As I look

over my old letters, here is the too familiar address on all the faded envelopes ; these certainly, you would say, were addressed to very me. But when I open one to read, it seems to me it can hardly have been " I " who wrote the juvenilities to which these things are in response. It was another being to whom they came fresh from the mail, —

" Like letters unto trembling hands ; "

another being who read them with the eagerness and responsive thoughts that I do now certainly seem to remember — by some strange witchcraft or self-substitution, like that of Sigurd and Gunnar upon the Flaming Heath — almost as if they had been my veritable own. He bore my name, drew checks with my signature, even went so far as to pay my bills, — that person in the past. But in any other sense I am hardly prepared to own him as my actual and continual self. I rather look upon him as the chick upon the eggshell, the moth upon the cracked cocoon, the man at the microscope upon the film of protoplasm, with the musing consciousness, " Such as thou art, once was I."

Since we actually go through these metamorphoses in life, it would be a significant and appropriate act, if only it were permitted us, to

shed our names from time to time. The other day, when I suddenly awaked once for all from an old nightmare of illusion, why might I not then and there have moulted to the extent of my name? Or that hour when I flung aside a particular opinion which had long ridden my mind's shoulders, like an Old Man of the Sea, why should there not have gone with it the designation of the being whose life had been thus spoiled, letting the new man start with a new heraldic device? Something of this sort, it is true, does happen when a person throws off his early nickname, and assumes the *toga virilis* of the full combination of baptismal titles through which his parents have made him imposing or ridiculous to the ear; and at last, it may be, adds the initials of dignity by which his college or his church has ministered to his vanity. "Dicky" becomes "Dick," and then full "Richard," and then "the Reverend Doctor," or "the Bishop," or "the ex-Vice-President." These developments are but the outward and audible symbols of mysterious inner transformations. The ex-Vice-President, bald now, glazed (if that be a proper term for the taking on of spectacles) and wise, would no more wish to be held responsible for the views he expressed in youth than he would chirp and twitter again at the charms of the

"girl he left behind" him, or answer to the maternal or sororal call of "Dicky."

More than this it would perhaps not be safe to permit to us in the way of escape from our proper labels. It is necessary that society should hold us to a strict accountability for our successive selves, and the name is the rope by which these are held together. The world must keep track of us, like a great police. Nature, besides, has us all down in her rogue's gallery; for our face is photographed in a thousand watchful eyes, as well as our name in so many ears.

Something of our restlessness in flitting from place to place may be accounted for by this instinctive craving to let the new and different man that we feel is in us, or might be in us, begin life all over again in a different place. *At last* we shall be permitted to do it, but not prematurely. We dodge to Dresden or Geneva, but we are there at the station to receive ourselves. *Cælum, non animum*, we find that we have changed. The old lives have managed to creep stealthily in our shadow, and soon they accost us at every street corner with ironical congratulations at our escape from them, in the new city as in the old.

Are there not lapses or gaps in the continuity of our conscious existence, of which we

may ourselves, by a little close attention, become aware? To begin with, there is the gap of nightly sleep, when the chain of consciousness, if it does not actually break off, at least sags under water and is lost to the eye for a space, to emerge glimmering with vague dreams into the sunshine of the waking hour. If the figure appears strained, it is because I am thinking of the early spring mornings in boyhood, when we used to go to the Little River to take up the gill-net for shad. A mist hung on the smoothly running water; there was an "Oriental fragrancy" of spearmint from the moist bank; the rattle of the oar in the rowlock sounded preternaturally loud, echoing under the covered bridge at that perfectly silent hour. When we boys begin to lift the strained top line of the net, pulling the skiff along by means of it, it is a moment of delicious excitement. What is that dim spot of glimmering gold, far down in the dark water? It grows, as we eagerly haul on the line, and the little waves plashed out by the boat make it waver and break, till it seems some huge and splendid prize, like the mysterious casket in the net of the Arabian fisherman. So memory, pulling in the line of submerged consciousness after profound sleep, catches sight of vague gleams of wonderful experiences.

But frequently, even in waking hours, I have seemed to detect lapses of conscious continuity. I look up, for example, from writing, and my eye turns to the window, and sight and attention seem to exhale, as it were, or evaporate into open space; thought ceases; for five seconds I am not a mind, I am a vegetable. Or in walking over some beaten track up and down in my garden, I have sometimes found myself at the other end of my beat, without having noticed anything, or thought of anything in particular, on the way. It has several times happened to me, in using my "home-exerciser" and giving to each pulley movement my accustomed forty counts, that I find myself at twenty-five or thirty, when I seemed only to have just counted twelve or fifteen. Now did I simply skip the intervening numbers, or did the unconscious brain cells go on automatically counting across a gap of that extent in my conscious existence? Suppose I had "died," as we call it, during that interval: what would have gone on into immortality, the consciousness or the gap?

But in truth this whole matter of the individual identity — the I-ness of the I — is thick with difficult questions. Here is my old apple-tree, for instance: is it a tree, or a thousand trees using one common bole? Every bud on

it is in reality a separate, individual being; as we may easily prove by setting it off by itself in some chink of another tree, where the sap of life shall come to it duly. Or in the case of a bunch of polyps, or of vorticels, on one stalk, how much of the coöperative life is entitled to say "I," and where does the weness of the we begin? If we are to count the whole tree, with its multitude of separate or separable lives, as only a single individual, how would it be with us if the human offspring were never wholly separated from the life-sustaining parent? Or would it strain our sense of identity at all, if the entire change of the substance of the body, popularly supposed to take place every seven years, should no longer occur gradually, cell by cell, but by a sudden cataclysm, some fine morning? As the old bone and tissue left him, and the new were clapped on in their place, would not the man have to jump to tie on the thread of new memory at the vanishing end of the old, lest he lose himself before he had time to find himself?

There is an old story they tell in the country that always seemed to me to have occult and esoteric meanings; as it were a kind of myth that had been builded better than was known, or else a survival from the folk-lore of some lost race of speculative mound-builders. The

tale is of an old farmer who was driving a yoke of oxen in an empty cart, and who yielded gradually to the sweet influences of a jug by his side, and fell fast asleep. The leisurely oxen having presently sauntered into the grass by the roadside, some humorous passer-by found them feeding there and turned them loose, leaving the peaceful sleeper snoring in the sun. By and by he awakened, sat up, rubbed his eyes, and slowly soliloquized: "*Am* I, or am I *not* I? If I *am* I, I have lost a good yoke of oxen. If I am *not* I, I have found a good cart!"

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "RIGHT" AND "OUGHT"?

The writer wishes to make only the prefatory remark that he puts forward no claim to the discovery of any new basis for morals. His effort is merely to bring more clearly into the light what seems to him to have been all along (in actual fact) the basis, and to have this more clearly recognized as such. While the substance of his essay was written, and propounded to a limited circle, before the publication of Herbert Spencer's "Data of Ethics," it comes — from a different point of view — to results in harmony with that work. Nor is this strange, since the writer had been familiar with Mr. Spencer's previous writings, and had no doubt been greatly indebted to him in all his later thinking on the subject.

In attempting to find a solid basis for morals, ethical writers have too much neglected the simple question of fact. They have asked what we *ought* to mean by "right," and what it is *right* to understand by "ought," but these questions lead into fog. What we need first of all to know is, What do we, *in fact*, mean by these words, as we use them from day to day? Every one uses them. They are found

in different races, in connection with all sorts of religious beliefs. They are applied everywhere — and this is very significant — to substantially the same classes of actions. It would be easy to point out these actions, and thus to show what these terms "right" and "ought" denote; but it is not so easy to point out the precise qualities of actions by virtue of which we say that they are "right," and "ought" to be done, and thus to show what these terms connote, or what we mean by them. It is a question, not of metaphysics or speculative ethics, but of pure psychology. We shall find, if we investigate it, that we have already a solid basis for morals, and that what is needed is to bring it to clear recognition. We shall find that "right," as a quality of actions, has reference to their consequences; that when we say a thing is "right" we mean that it conduces to human welfare; that the highest welfare is conceived to be that which Herbert Spencer describes in his "Data of Ethics" as "complete living."

It will be best to take, for our analysis, a case in point. Suppose that A. is angry with B., and has a murderous impulse toward him. But the thought arises, "It is not right to kill him;" "I ought not to kill him." The two terms do not connote the same thing. Let us

take them separately. First, what does he mean by "right"?

To begin with, A. does not need to stop to think of the moral aspect of this particular case of killing. He simply perceives that it falls in with a class of acts concerning which he has previously formed this judgment of "not right." In other words, he now only *feels* it to be "not right," by an instantaneous instinct. But how has this been formed?

There are certain adjectives, oftenest applied to concrete objects, and connoting impressions made directly on special senses. Such are *blue*, *sweet*, *rough*, etc. There are other adjectives, oftenest applied to actions, and connoting their results. Such are *dangerous*, *beneficent*, *ruinous*, etc. To which of these classes does "right" belong? Does it express some quality of an action that directly strikes a special sense, an "inner sense," comparable to the outer senses of sight, touch, etc.? or does it express some character in the consequences likely to follow the action? In other words, when A. says, "It is not right to kill B.," is he expressing an impression made directly on some special "sense of right," or a judgment as to consequences?

We must avoid one liability to error here: if a certain action has repeatedly been followed

by evil results, although the first judgment concerning it was plainly an estimate of consequences, it finally comes to seem a direct verdict of impression on an inner sense. For example, the action of thrusting the hand into boiling metal is declared so instantaneously to be dangerous that one feels as if the action required no weighing of consequences, but as if some "sense of danger" immediately declared it dangerous. Originally, however, the child required a process of reasoning to apply this judgment as to its quality. And we again come back to the original need of reflection when we have learned that there are certain conditions under which the action is not at all dangerous, and once more the adjective really stands for the result of a process of reasoning as to the probable consequences of the action. In the same way, it is apparently the expression of a direct impression on some "sense of right" when A. says, "It is not right to kill B." But if we go back to the period of childhood, we find that originally this action of killing made no such impression on the mind, — say in the case of killing animals. If it is true that children are ever born with this judgment (so to speak) that killing is not "right," it is probably the result of ancestral experience, and in no case amounts to more than some instinc-

tive physical repugnance. It is safe to say that the time when the act of killing first seems clearly not "right" to the child, is the moment when he recognizes that certain evil *results* — punishment to himself, or pain and deprivation of life to the animal — follow the act. Here also, as in the case of plunging the hand into boiling metal, we come at last to find that killing is sometimes right, as in the killing of animals for food, or the judicial killing of men, and again the judgment (after having passed through a stage where it seems immediate, as if the verdict of a special sense) becomes again visibly a weighing of consequences.

In examining the origin and growth of the idea of "right" in childhood (or what is very much the same thing, in undeveloped men), we find that the idea changes very greatly as the mind develops. Perhaps there could be no better test of the degree of development of men than the meaning of this word "right" to their minds, — not the denotation merely, or the designation of what actions are "right," but the connotation, or the quality in which their "rightness" is conceived to consist. In earliest childhood, as the mother expresses to the child her displeasure at certain acts, this displeasure, followed it may be by other pains, comes to be the prominent result of these ac-

tions to his consciousness. Conversely, certain actions become associated in the child's mind with the agreeable result of the parent's approval, and perhaps reward. These he learns to consider "right" actions. If, now, the family is an ordinarily religious one, the child learns also to expect the displeasure and punishment of God from certain acts, his approval and reward from certain others. To a greater or less extent, also, he is taught — or learns by his own observation — to expect from actions a result in approval or disapproval from other people, at first in the household, and afterward in the outside world. "Right" comes, then, to signify to the child's mind a certain set of consequences to himself from parents, from God, from public opinion.

But this is not all. From the beginning the child has what may be called sympathy, or the tendency to put himself in another's place. (It is seen even in the brute animals, at least in motherhood.) He feels the evil results of actions to others to some extent as to himself. In other words, the consequences of actions come to be computed with reference to others, as well as to self. "Not right," in fine, comes to mean what will bring evil consequences to all.

When, therefore, A. says to himself, "It is

not right to kill B.," his consciousness contains, as the connotation of the word "right," a judgment as to the consequences of this action. It is a judgment so rapid, and its elements are so tangled together in vague combination, that it seems an instantaneous sense impression. But there are likely to lie in it the obscure remains of the teachings of childhood, the apprehension of parental, of divine, of public displeasure to himself, the sympathetic apprehension of the resulting evil to B., and the perception (if he be a reflective man), however general and rapidly swept together in consciousness, of universal harms to universal being.

It is an interesting question, the answer to which throws some light on the explanation of the idea: How did this word "right" come to be selected in language to represent this idea? The original sense of the term, not in our own tongue only, is of *straightness*, as a "right line." "Wrong," also, is originally "wrung," or wrenched from the straight line. While we must beware of foisting into the mind at a given moment, in trying to analyze what it contains in using any word, too much of the original sense of it (for of this the mind at the moment may hold very little indeed in consciousness), yet the choice of a certain

word, in the growth of language, to represent a certain secondary idea, has always some significance. In this case the instinctive selection of "right" and "wrong," — the straight and the crooked, — to stand for actions characterized respectively by good and evil consequences, seems to point to a perception that the straight line is the useful and convenient one on the whole. It is the line the results of which are, in the long run, most satisfactory. In building, in constructing, in traveling, in adapting means to ends in general, the *straight* is on the whole the successful. Out of all the endless variety of crooked lines, only a few are beautiful, only a few are useful. Numberless phrases involve this perception. The boy must "toe the mark." The account is "all straight." The man is "level-headed." Methods are "crooked." We "straighten out" confusions.

To the question, then, "What does the man mean by right?" our answer is, He really means "productive of good consequences; conducive to welfare." If it be asked, "*whose* welfare?" the reply must be, It will depend on the grade of development of him who uses the word. It may in the consciousness be limited to self, it may be so wide as to include all.

If one doubt that it is this estimate of con-

sequences that determines for us whether actions are right, let him notice how immediately we decide an action to be wrong — however it had been felt to be right before — the moment we are convinced that it will bring harm to all. When the Laureate makes Pallas say to the hesitating Paris : —

> "Because right is right, to follow right
> Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence,"

we understand that the meaning is, it is wise to scorn momentary and merely personal consequences, in favor of those which are lasting and universal. Without the expectation of consequences of some sort, to some one, actions could have to us no quality of rightness or wrongness at all.

But do all actions that are judged to be conducive to welfare bring with them the sense of their being "right"? A man puts on his shoes in dressing. The consequences of not doing so are distinct, yet he has no sense of right or wrong connected with the act. It is a mere question of prudence. Suppose he knew the leaving off his shoes would result in his not being able to walk to a certain point in time to win a suit which would secure to him an immense fortune? This increased amount of anticipated evil still does not give the act any tinge of moral quality to his mind, so far as

the consequences to self only are thought of. But the preventing another from having shoes, though it would only cause some slight pain, seems to him wrong. Still more the preventing *another* from winning his fortune.

Yet we have said that the very origin of the idea of "right" in the child's mind lies in the perception of consequences to himself. How is it, then, that it seems to be only when results to others are involved that we pass from a perception of what is merely "prudent" to a felt quality of "rightness"? Has the man merely transferred a name, applying now the term "prudent" to that quality of an action which once he would have termed "right"?

No, not merely the name, but the idea contained in his consciousness is different. It is important to detect in just what this difference consists. In both cases the result is conceived only as regarding self. In the case of the child, where the idea seems fairly represented by the term "right," the result (the penalty) is conceived as coming from a person. In the case of the man, where the idea is represented by the term "prudent," the result is to come from impersonal forces of nature. Is it not the personality of the source of penalty that makes the difference? Suppose that the man believed that if he left off his shoes God would

directly punish him by making him ill. Now again it would seem to him a question of right and wrong. Suppose God were conceived to act unalterably and uniformly by unvarying laws, the illness coming now, not as a special adaptation to the individual case, but as the result of unchangeable conditions. Now it has become mere "prudence" again. Is it not, then, the element of uncertainty — the vagueness of the expectation — that gives that tinge to the idea which makes us call it "right" instead of "prudent"? If the child knows that a machine will invariably strike his hand whenever he puts it on the wheel, he considers it to be "prudent" to avoid that action. If he knows that his mother will *probably* strike his hand if he puts it on the sleeping baby, he considers it "right" to avoid the act. Trying to grasp all that the consciousness contains in either case, can we see any difference between the two ideas except the definiteness and certainty of the expectation of pain in the one, the vagueness and uncertainty in the other? For the personal displeasure always introduces an incalculable element into the penalty. In other words, there is a sense of the *authority* of the parent, of God, or of public opinion, conceived as sources of penalty; and this "authority" seems on analysis to yield only a sense of the

indefinite power — the unlimited possibility of producing consequences — in these beings.

It is not necessarily in merely growing mature in years that one reaches a higher development of the idea of right. No doubt many persons of mature age still have in their consciousness only some vague apprehension of penalties to themselves when they feel an act to be not "right." Perhaps it might sometimes be found that a man considers an act not "prudent" when it threatens some slight and temporary damage to himself, and another act not "right" when to his belief it threatens him with everlasting torment.

But in those minds which pass on to further development in growing older, the consideration of consequences to others more and more takes the place of this childish idea of "right." The consideration of consequences to self, from any source whatever, hardly gives to the idea concerning an act any flavor whatever of "rightness," but only a sense of its "prudence." It is only what would cause generally harm that seems "wrong;" it is only what conduces to the general welfare that seems "right."

But there is a higher idea than that of "right," as the mere correlative of "wrong." "Right" as ordinarily used means only what

we *may* do without doing wrong. The higher idea is that of "duty." This word means not what we merely *may* do, but what we "ought" to do. Here again we see a development from a cruder to a more evolved morality. At first, whether in childhood, or in the childish period of nations, or in the permanent condition of unprogressive nations and persons, morality goes no farther than in the abstention from "wrong." Its precepts are only "Thou shalt not." But there comes later the sense of "duty." The aspiration is to do not only the right, but all the right one can as one's whole duty. The morality is based not on "Thou shalt not," nor even on "Thou shalt," but "I *will*."

And what, now, is the true analysis of this further idea of "ought"? We have said that it is not identical with the idea of "right"; their denotation may be the same, but their connotation is different. When A. says, "It is not right to kill B., I ought not to do it," he really says two different things. The idea "ought" carries in his consciousness a more prominent flavor of the outside power compelling him by means of penalties. It is necessary, for any clear analysis, to consider the *origin* of this "ought" idea in the individual mind, since at any given moment it consists

partly of a residuum from previous stages of the idea, and cannot be completely analyzed without a view of these.

When the child A. is about to take an orange that has been given to B., the mother makes him understand that the act would incur her displeasure and possibly other pains. He thus learns that the act would not be "right." Presently he learns also that its evil consequences to B. are a part of its "wrongness;" by and by these perhaps constitute for him its chief wrongness. But he learns to feel at the same time the sense of his mother's outside compelling power upon him *through* the motive of her displeasure and other penalties. "She obliges me (forces me through motives) not to do it," is his feeling. "I am under obligation, I *ought* not to do it." Moreover, by sympathy (which enters into training more than is ordinarily perceived), catching her feeling, he comes to feel toward himself, on occasion of such an act, as he has perceived her to feel toward him. So grows up self-reproof. From God, conceived as a higher parent, he comes to expect a similar displeasure; and from public opinion still another. From the latter alone, indeed, the idea might spring up, in the case of a person growing up without parent or religious training. The mature man, therefore, is likely

to have in his consciousness as the "ought" idea a more or less confused mingling of the idea of the parental displeasure (possibly now a mere relic), of the divine displeasure (possibly also a relic), the displeasure of public opinion, and the displeasure of his own permanent, as against his momentary, self.

In many minds of the present day it will furnish a clear illustration of the survival of relics of ideas in the moral consciousness to recall their own experience of the Sabbath-keeping precepts of childhood. If (as was true in the writer's case) the child was taught that the reading of "Robinson Crusoe" on Sunday was a wicked act, some vague idea of an "ought" connected with ordinary employments on that day will be found to have survived a long time beyond any acceptance of it by the mature reason.

It is an interesting inquiry, again, how the word "ought" came to be used in the growth of our language. For the history of the use of a word throws a little (however uncertain) light on the development of the idea in the minds of our forefathers. The word appears in the earliest known form of the language as *âh*, meaning "I have, I own." (This present tense seems to have been, earlier still, the past of a verb signifying to labor; and to have

come to mean, therefore, "I have labored and earned, and so *have*.") "Ought" was the past tense of this *âh*, but took on the meaning of the present tense. It is important to notice that *âh* had originally in English the sense of "I own," not "I owe." The latter was a secondary sense that grew up in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. From the sense of "I have," it came to be used with *to* as a kind of auxiliary verb: it appears about the year 1200 as "*I âh to don*," "I have to do," so and so. We can only grope here in conjectures, but the history of the idea seems to have been, "I have this thing to do;" that is, "it has been given me to do," or "set for me to do." That is to say, "I *ought*, I am obliged (under obligation) to do it;" "I *must* do it, or something will happen to me."

From its frequent occurrence in phrases with *to*, followed by a verb, like the above, it seems to have taken on the sense of "owe" in general.

When, then, A. says, "I ought not to kill B.," his idea — so far as the history of the use of this word throws any glimmer of light upon it — is not based (as often seems to be supposed) on any sense of "owing" it to B., or to the community, or the Deity; for the word was used to mean "ought" before it was used to mean

"owe." The etymology rather points to a basis in the sense of having a task imposed on him by an outside power, or by his own permanent self with penalties. In other words, the phrase, "I *owe* him a dollar," came from the thought, "I *have to pay* him a dollar," and not *vice versa*. And the phrase, "I *ought* to do this," came from the thought, "I have to do this, I *must* do it," and not *vice versa*.

Obligation, then, or the "ought," as a state of a person in relation to a proposed action, reduces under analysis to a liability to indefinite pains and penalties from some superior power, which thus compels him toward or from the act. And the connection of the idea "ought" with the idea "right" is consummated when we arrive at the conception of general ideas, and conceive of this superior power — parental, divine, public, or that of our own permanent self — as acting in accordance with abstract "right," or that which conduces to general welfare.

Thus we see that as fast as the conception of higher powers, with farther reaching penalties and rewards, comes in, the idea of the "ought" shifts its basis. At first the child's "ought" is based on the mandates of the parent, whatever they be. When he becomes aware of a higher public law, the felt obligation of obedi-

ence to the parent is modified by this conception. When, further, he perceives a law of abstract "right," higher still than the state, or his immediate public (as in the question of obeying a vicious law), his "ought" again is modified. At last he comes to say even of the Deity, "If he commanded me to do what was unjust, what was cruel, what was not right, I would not obey:" because he divines a total of things, concerned with consequences absolutely universal, which has now become in fact his Deity. It is the conception, as the poet embodies it, of "the Quiet" overruling "Setebos." So that one's final "ought" is felt toward what is conceived as the hostility of the universe against evil, and its friendliness toward good.

And here we reach our final question, so far as the theoretical discussion of the basis of morals is concerned. "Good," "welfare" — what do we mean by these words? The "ought," we have said, in its highest development, becomes a perception of superior powers working for the good, i. e. the welfare, of all; the "right," we have said, is such action as is perceived to be conducive to this good or welfare of all; but *what* "good," *what* "welfare"?

Here again we arrive at a region of changing and developing standards. There are many

words which remain the same, but represent different ideas in any individual mind at different stages of growth, or in different minds; as a fossil wood retains its form, but new particles replace the old. "Delightful," for instance, has a sufficient degree of identity of connotation to serve for that rude sort of approximate communication between minds which makes up ordinary speech; but the word really stands for many various and indeed contradictory ideas. Take, for instance, the common phrase, "a delightful book." How little it tells us concerning the book, unless we know who utters it. So of the words "good" and "welfare:" we begin perhaps by feeling that physical pleasure is the "good" thing. It is the conception of infancy, and of those minds that never pass beyond the infancy of the intellect. To such the "welfare" of a man would consist in being all one sensual nerve, and this perpetually gratified. But there develops gradually in the mind a perception that pleasures grade themselves into lower and higher. We rate the soul higher than the body, and we rate the satisfaction of the spirit higher than the gratification of the nerve. There arises the conception which we name "happiness." This idea, to be sure, is also various in various minds. But on the whole we seem to mean by

it at least some more permanent condition of satisfaction than any momentary "pleasure;" and on the whole it seems to stand, to any given mind, for the highest sort of satisfaction it knows. But, farther on, the idea of happiness itself rises. The word begins to seem inadequate. It did, for example, to Thomas Carlyle, who substituted for it (in "Sartor Resartus") the word "blessedness," meaning thereby a possession of higher satisfactions, more intellectual, more spiritual, than the term "happiness" — tarnished as it is by its use for mere animal pleasures — seemed able to express. Least of all do we now feel satisfied with the idea of *contentment* as constituting any worthy sort of happiness. "Contented?" we say. "It is a mere negation of discontent. The swine is contented in his litter; the mollusk is even more contented in his mud; the lifeless stone is most contented of all."

And at this point we begin to perceive the essence of the still further developing idea of welfare. If the stone's condition is, least of all, "welfare," if that of the mollusk is but a little better, and so on, what is this increasing element, as we go higher in the grade of existence, that approaches more and more our idea of real "good," real "welfare"? It is nothing less than *Being — conscious existence*,

completeness of life. Why does intellectual pleasure seem higher to us than animal pleasure? Because it involves *more* of the man. Why did Carlyle's "blessedness" represent to him a higher idea than even the highest happiness? Because it was more inclusive — because it expressed the life of the "Spirit," the feelings, the will, as well as of the dry intellect. The highest aspiration, then, comes to be that for increased totality of conscious life — in all the natural human powers, of body, mind, and spirit. Those courses of action — those movements of the thought or the feeling, even — which tend toward narrowing, belittling, dwarfing the man's nature, seem bad and degrading. Those actions and impulses seem lofty which tend toward broadening, deepening, fulfilling the stream of conscious life. We cry with the poet, —

> "'T is *life* whereof our nerves are scant,
> *More life,* and *fuller*, that I want."

And we feel it to be the highest promise he could make when Jesus declared, —

"I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it *more abundantly*."

And this brings us, from a different standpoint, to Spencer's conclusion in the "Data of Ethics."

At the same time with this progress in the

idea of welfare, of the thing most to be desired, there is a parallel progress in the idea respecting the persons for whom we most desire it. We begin by craving it for self. Little by little the desire broadens itself, for each of the higher forms of good in turn to include as its recipients one's family, one's friends, one's race, one's universe. The highest welfare, the greatest good, the *summum bonum*, is at last, in our conception, the attainment of the highest possible grade of development — the conscious possession of the most complete possible existence — by all beings. And by "right" we mean what promotes this; and by "wrong" we mean what frustrates this. And that which we feel we "ought" to do is that toward which we feel that the universal powers compel us by motives of these recognized consequences to all.

If any system of religious ethics has held up to men the idea of physical pleasure as the chief reward, and physical pain as the chief punishment, it is by this fact seen to be a crude system. Nor does it elevate the standard in kind to extend this pleasure or pain to all eternity. We recognize in innumerable cases that mere pleasure and pain are no true tests of "good" or "welfare." The man would not exchange his human life with all its elements

of pain for the swine's life with all its elements of pleasure. The higher standard is so wrought into our very instincts that we instantly recognize the completer life to be the higher or more desirable life, regardless of any question of pleasure or pain. Pleasure is no doubt *a* good, insomuch as it promotes a more abounding life; and pain is no doubt *an* evil, insomuch as it represses or destroys life. But *given* the abounding life, and we feel that it would be a higher choice to take pain with the great life than to take pleasure with the little life. Our sympathy and admiration go out to the suffering Prometheus rather than to the voluptuous Jove. We could rather worship — yea, envy — the eternal martyr than the eternal swine.

And now, finally, it will be asked, If the test of the good, of the true welfare, is its satisfaction of the desire for abounding life, how can we be sure that this *is* the "highest" satisfaction, that this *is* the "highest" desire? In other words, *what is the test of our test?*

We are well aware that here we reach a chasm which very many persons will be unprepared to cross with us. We shall cross safely, but the bridge is not such as tempts the unaccustomed eye.

For our answer can only be, There is *no* test except the existence of the desire itself. We

find by actual observation that in fact this *is* the paramount desire of man. To satisfy it *seems* to him the highest satisfaction, and therefore it *seems* to him the highest desire. "But can he not in some way *know* whether it is the highest?" We answer, There is no other meaning to this word "highest," itself, under complete analysis, than "what is *found to be — in fact* — paramount in human estimation."

"But," it will be objected, "the soul finds in itself many desires. At one time one is strongest, at other times another. How determine which of these is the paramount desire?" We answer, We can only count that highest which is the most permanent and the paramount desire of the sanest and completest men. This desire we take as the test, not on the ground that it pleases us to take it; not because we are devoid of the craving for some more certain sanction; not from any consideration of its convenience in instruction, or in supporting this or that institution or creed; but we take it because the honest truth appears to be that we have that, and we have no other. We may invent or imagine as many as we please, but, like it or not, conceive it to be safe or not, this — the mind's sane estimate of what is most desirable — is the only one that does actually in fact exist for us.

Many persons take such a view of the universe as allows them to believe that they can contrive some safer way for men than the open sight of the actual truth. Even for themselves, some feel that it is more desirable to retain agreeable illusions than to allow them to be torn away. These persons will prefer to say concerning the test of right and duty, Such and such standards have been handed down from the past, and it is easiest for me and safest for the world to believe that the past had some superior wisdom in setting up these standards. "God's will," for example, is offered as the true test. But how do we know what is God's will? He has revealed it, it will be said, in the Bible. But why should we believe this is a revelation from God, seeing that it was written by men, and appears to be so similar to what men have all along been accustomed to write elsewhere? Because these particular men claim to have heard God say these things. But why believe such a strange claim when we should not think of believing it if any of our neighbors made it? Because, it will be said, it was made a long time ago, and has been for a long time believed. But are there not many beliefs of great antiquity which have turned out to be erroneous?

At some such point the mind of the person

who insists on the existence of some supernaturally revealed and infallible test for morals is apt to turn to this other support for his confidence in the Bible as a basis: its own internal evidence of a divine character. "These commands," he says, "are evidently divine, because they are right; because they are the highest and best in the world." But by what *test* right and highest and best? It is the "vicious circle" again.

There is no possible answer, try as we may to avoid it, but the answer we have already given: the test which the mind finds itself in fact applying is the only test. That to man is "best" which he most desires. That desire is the best which is his paramount and most permanent desire. And that desire is, if we consult mankind in general, if we consult our own consciousness, or all history and all literature, the desire for a "good" or "welfare" consisting of the greatest possible total of conscious life.

This desire for abounding life conceals itself under many more visible desires. It lies, however, hidden under our craving for society, which stimulates and calls out increased activity of all our powers; under our craving for solitude, when now too much society serves only to repress and confine the greater activity

of our own mind and spirit; under our enjoyment of music, which fulfills not only the possible capacity of the mere sense of hearing, but awakens a world of inner life, in memories and dreams; under our pleasure in all art and literature, which at once give wings and a wider horizon to the mind; under our passion for broader truth, which (linking many facts in one) gives the intellect a clearer and more inclusive grasp — a completer life of knowing; under, at last, as we have seen, our aspiration for the highest "good" of all, which is but another name for the completest satisfaction, for all, of this highest desire.

If any one says, "This is not the highest good thing, or *summum bonum*," he is merely saying (if we push the statement to the furthest analysis), "This is not what *I* find most desirable — that is to say, what *I* most desire." It becomes, then, merely a question as to whose desire is to be the final arbiter; and we find none better than the desire of those who are the sanest and completest men — and in them, the permanent judgment, not any momentary whim.

It would not be true to say, as might be said by some one who looked no deeper than the surface of the matter, that this leaves every man a law unto himself; or that it leaves

every man to do what seems good in his own eyes. On the contrary, it sends a man for his true law to the dictates of universal reason, against his personal passion, to what seems good, in the eyes of all sane and sober judgments, against the troubled vision of his momentary desire.

This is, as we have said, no new test; it is that to which all moral precepts and principles have in reality been subjected from the beginning. Whatever sacred books, whatever divine revelations, whatever commandments written upon tables of brass or stone, have been adopted, have been adopted after being subjected to this test. The Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, find and always have found in this their real sanction. And if to-morrow a code of moral rules were suddenly seen written in golden letters across the sky at noonday, so that it should be said everywhere, "It cannot have come by any human means; it must be a revelation of the Deity," what would be the necessary action of our minds upon it? We should necessarily do just what we have always done with Vedas, Korans, and Bibles. We should bring it to the test of the judgment of the human reason. We should ask, first of all, "Are these precepts *right?*" If the reason declared them wrong, we should re-

ject them, no matter what appeared to be their origin. If the stone tables had commanded, "Thou shalt steal," and "Thou shalt kill," the human reason would have declared them wrong, and rejected them. If the Golden Rule were, "Hate thy neighbor, and do him evil," there would have been the same verdict and result. And by what test? By this same old test, which, be we satisfied with it or not, is all we have: the test of *consequences*, as affecting human welfare, as promoting or frustrating what seems most desirable to men; that is to say, the satisfaction of the highest human desire, the desire for true and full existence.

"Thou shalt not kill," is not, then, right because it is in the Bible. It is in the Bible because, by the test of human judgment, it is right. Or rather, that book in which it is found is held to be "The Bible," because these precepts found there are by the human reason judged to be right. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is not a divine command because Jesus uttered it, but Jesus is accounted divine because he uttered such commands. If one dislikes to accept this statement, let him test its validity by asking himself, as before, If Jesus had uttered precisely contrary commands to these, what character should we attribute to him? To die for others is not

a divine act because Jesus did so, but that he did so is his highest claim to men's acceptance as a divine being. And by what test? Always by this same test, — there is no other possible, — that these noble precepts and actions are recognized as being such as universally promote welfare. And *what* welfare? That which men universally seek as the most desirable, — abounding life. Not animal pleasure, for whenever it clashes with this we decide against it; not merely our own pleasure, even of the intellect and spirit, for whenever these clash with its attainment by others, we decide against it; not merely happiness, even of the purest kind, and even for others, unless, indeed, we lift the word "happiness" above any ordinary use of it, and make it stand for this highest welfare itself; for in case of the alternative we esteem it better to be unhappy with abounding life than to be happy at any lower stage of being.

But in reality no such alternative as this last is possible, except as an imaginary hypothesis, for it is the very characteristic of happiness of every desirable sort that it promotes life; and of pain, that it represses and tends to destroy life. Happiness is therefore a thing worthy of pursuit, as a means. Even pleasure is a good thing, still as a means. Nor can it ever be a bad or wrong thing unless it contravene

the law of right; unless, that is to say, it tends to oppose the highest welfare of self or others.

The more one contemplates the human story in the past, or the human life as it goes on about us in the present, the more one realizes the truth of this generalization, that the desire for abounding life is the paramount desire of man. There is hardly an activity but goes back to this for its mainspring, hardly a desire but rests upon this deeper desire. All history is the record of man's efforts to attain personal liberty; and this liberty — for which so many battles have been fought, and dynasties overturned, and blood spilled — is only the riddance from whatever hampered large action and large living. It was the longing for "more life and fuller," not for self only but for all, that made the heroes and martyrs of the long struggle for free government. It was so of the struggle for religious liberty, so for liberty of thought. Freedom to do and *be*, to the utmost limits of each individual's possibility, was the prize they sought.

The history of the efforts of women toward emancipation from personal and social tyranny illustrates the working of this same fundamental desire. It has not been so much any increase of pleasure they have sought, or for a position where they could be more happy, in

any mere sense of being contented, but the liberty to live larger lives, to be more, to have in themselves an increased total of the common human existence.

The history of all art is but another such illustration. Form after form of art has been developed under the pressure of this same desire to live in large worlds, to give the whole soul its fullest activity of life — if not through the actual surroundings, with their narrowing and deadening influences, then through the nerves of the receptive imagination, that can vibrate to the touch of the creative imagination of the artist, and dream the gardens of paradise in a desert, or heaven in hell. Music, architecture, sculpture, painting, all have their hold on men through the fact that in the first place these sounds and forms and colors give the mere sense its fullest possible activity (as the chord depends for its delightfulness on its giving the ear a larger total of effect than is possible in the single tone, or the discord; and as the line of beauty, the double waving curve, does the same for the eye); and in the second place, the fact that through the effect of these arts on the imagination, the feelings, the reason, they waken to stir — for the moment at least — the whole man, that was half dormant before, into full and abounding life.

So, finally, the history of literature illustrates once more the working of this same paramount desire. The drama has moved and delighted men because it brought into their conscious existence a wealth of other scenes and more varied activity. It enabled them, for the one brief hour, to *live through* the emotions and actions of many souls — to compress into a few rich moments the whole destinies of men or empires, made their own through the tumult of the inner life. Fiction, from its first crude beginnings in some Hebrew or Arabic tale to the novel of Scott or George Eliot, has been but the outcome of this same irrepressible craving to enlarge the bounds of our own narrow existence through the inner experience of the fortunes, the joys, the woes, of an imaginary world. Poetry, with its "eternal passion, eternal pain," has both been the expression of this hunger for a fuller life in the poet, and has fed the sacred fire of this aspiration in the world.

And of the relative value of all art, as of all literature, this furnishes the only true and rational test: what has it added to the inner life? That symphony, that painting, that poem is greatest which more than any other has had for its effect in the world "that we might have life" — the inner life, and through that the outer also — "and that we might have it more abundantly."

And so at last, to return to our starting-point, in morals also: that impulse, that choice, that action is the most "right," is the highest "duty," which most tends to satisfy this paramount human desire and aspiration, for that fuller and more abounding life which is not only the goal of all unconscious progress, working in the dark of natural forces, but of all conscious wishes and purposes, working in the light of the human reason and will.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INTERRUPTIONS

THERE is a certain small and yet in the long run important hindrance that I often encounter in the act of writing, for which I should very much like to find the exact psychological explanation. It is very possibly a common experience with all toilers in pen and ink. When I am deeply absorbed in a piece of work, and my whole mind is fixed on a train of thought which I am trying to follow out and express in precise language, a sudden interruption (as by my wife's asking me a question) causes a peculiar and specific mental wrench or jar that is more than an annoyance, and amounts to a positive pain. What is it that happens in the brain as the physical concomitant or cause of this? I observe that the shock varies in intensity with the completeness of the absorption or abstraction of the mind in its work. This is so much a matter of instinct that I find myself, during any perceived liability to such interruption, withholding my attention from complete concentration on my writ-

ing, in order to lessen the force of the painful blow that I feel may come at any moment. (This secondary effort, by the way, or voluntary restraining of the mind from its desired track, always seems to produce in me, no matter how much I may resist it, a kind of irritation or sub-irritation of temper, after a little, which soon destroys the possibility of any satisfactory production.) Is the physical explanation of this interruption-shock, perhaps, that the sudden back-flow of the nerve currents, inundating tracts in the brain left empty by the concentration of the whole mind on its task, gives a kind of stab or jerk to the nervous centres? And does the effort to withhold a part of the attention, while consciously subject to interruption, correspond, physically, to a forcible keeping of all the channels partially filled against a too sudden wave, or jet, of energy?

The condition of things in the mind at such a time always seems to me (to suggest it by the merest inadequate hint of metaphor) as if the effort to hold and carry on a train of thought were a muscular struggle, while grasping tightly a number of separate lengths of bamboo rod to keep them close together, end to end, and in a perfectly straight line, as the necessary condition of having a new length continually sprout out from the growing extremity. Now if, at

the moment when every nerve is strained to hold these pieces in position, some one were to give us a sudden *shove* in the back, — such seems the kind of interruption I speak of.

Whatever be the correct explanation of the phenomenon, the suffering and hindrance from it are considerable in the course of a lifetime; and we hereby bring it to the attention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Wri— But, come to think, there is no such benevolent organization as yet in existence.

THE BREAD-AND-BUTTER MOMENTS OF THE MIND

It is astonishing how insensible we sometimes are to the most beautiful or sublime spectacles. Noble scenes, which at another time would inspire the imagination and thrill the heart with a tumult of emotions, now unfold their glory before our unmoved eyes, and the humdrum thoughts plod along their accustomed way. Travelers know this phenomenon very well. Ely Cathedral lives in my memory as a delicious vision of solemn loveliness; but when my friends praise York Minster, I hardly recall that I was ever there. This indifference is to be ascribed to the fact that in York my brain happened to be dough or putty for the time being, and in no respect on the architecture of the minster. I remember that George Sand had this experience in her voyage to Italy. In the "Histoire de ma Vie" she says:

"Je poursuivis mon voyage quand même, ne souffrant pas, mais peu à peu *si abrutie* par les frissons, les défaillances et la somnolence, que je vis Pise et le Campo Santo *avec une grande*

apathie. Il me devint même indifférent de suivre une direction ou une autre ; Rome et Venise furent jouées à pile ou face. *Venise face* retomba dix fois sur le plancher. J'y voulus voir une destinée, et je partis pour Venise par Florence. . . . Je vis toutes les belles choses qu'il fallait voir, . . . mais j'étais glacée, et, en regardant le Persée de Cellini et la Chapelle carrée de Michel Ange, il me semblait, par moments, que j'étais statue moi-même. La nuit, je rêvais que je devenais mosaïque et je comptais attentivement mes petits carrés de lapis et de jaspe."

But the same phlegmatic seizure often occurs to us at home and in familiar surroundings. Three nights ago, standing at my window, I saw the full moon rise superbly through a low horizon drapery of shadowed cloud-folds ; and I said to myself, Let us go walk in the garden, and drink in the splendor of this celestial spectacle. So I sought my favorite pacing-ground, a wide path from the round rose-bed to the elm-tree, running between lines of stately cannas. There had been purifying rain, and the sky was deepened to its most lustrous dark ; the soft billow-edges of the few fleeces, swimming over across the big moon, caught, turn by turn, a faint tinge of halo colors. The moon was dazzling. Who can believe that

mere sunshine, falling on mere rock and sand, will reflect such a white-cold intensity of light? I gazed intently on the blinding shield, as if to compel it to seem to me what it really is, — the big globe, rolling there, dizzily unsupported, in empty space. I said, "That distance across the bulging disk is about that which the Pacific Railroad traverses across our continent. Let me try to imagine the little train, full of earth inhabitants, creeping in a curve around yonder point of shadow, and across the bridgeless nose of the man in the moon." For an instant the conception of the globular form and the enormous bulk, swinging on its rounds, almost touched on the confines of my expectant imagination; then fled away unseizable, and left but the silvery spot, stuck there inadequately against the blue ceiling, so ridiculously near that even the lighter clouds pass behind, instead of before it, and a venturous balloon might be capable of bumping it at any rash discharge of ballast.

Then I took up my pacing back and forth. The broad silvered leaves of the cannas seemed to float motionless in the great flood of light, and beneath each hung its motionless black shade. Every shadow of every delicate bough and twig of the beech and the elm was lace; and bough and twig themselves, less distinct

and more ethereal than their shadows, were only the mentally conceived patterns, or Platonic Ideas, of the lace, hovering above it in the air. What a mysterious and glorious night, and what subtlest and most celestial dreams should throng the brain at such an hour! Back and forth, to and fro, I paced; and what, think you, were the sublime ideas I found in my brain, as I suddenly became aware of myself, after some minutes of floating in that sea of twice-distilled and space-traversing radiance? I was listening with lively displeasure to the squeaking of my own new shoes. I was thinking, "How can this intolerable thing be cured?" I was picturing in my imagination the sedulous shoemaker, anxiously handling the superinteguments, and discussing with me the possible ways and means of silencing this music of abandoned soles. I remembered that some one had once recommended a hypodermic injection of pumice-stone. As I turned from the shadow back into the full flood of radiance, I found myself wondering whether the leathern layers would have to be unstitched, or whether anything could be done with a gimlet.

I saw that the whole magnificent spectacle of the night was being wasted on such an insect as I, and that the most suitable scheme was to go ingloriously to bed.

THE SLIPPERINESS OF CERTAIN WORDS

Next to the pleasure of finding ourselves different from people in general with regard to great matters is the pleasure of discovering our identity with them in small matters. For my own part, at least, I like to know that I am not so eccentric as I may have feared in various little "tricks and manners" of my body or my mind. I am always pleased to meet people who wear their thumbs inside their shut hand; and who have square-toed shoes; and who like the smell of catnip and the taste of some cates when a little burnt; and who reluct at shaking hands; and who never sharpen the lead of a pencil; and who say "good-morning" to the servants; and who reject the use of a spoon, as being a thing to take powders in, or the milder nourishments of helpless infancy.

So it would be a gratification to me to know that others are subject to a habit of the mind which has always clung to me, and which I suspect of being nearly universal. I mean the habit of forgetting certain words, which have

been reached for and have slipped away so many times that they have become permanently slippery, at least about the handle. There are words which are such old offenders in this way that I feel their vicinity before I get to them, in speaking or writing, and I say to myself, There! I shall have a time, now, to get hold of that word! — and so I always do. *Peremptory* is one of these slippery words, with me. *Complacent* is another. *Sententious* is a third. And there is still another, which even now, as I sought it for an example, escaped my grasp, "as slipper as an eeles sliding:" it is the word *deprecatory*. The way I took to find it and seize upon it, just at this moment, was by keeping before my mind's eye the image of a humble small dog standing before a haughty big one, in momentary doubt as to whether the tail will wag or the jaws will devour. By keeping this picture vividly present to one lobe of the brain, while the other lobe strained every nerve to seize the initial syllable, vaguely felt (that most mysterious state of the mind) to be just hovering on the very edge of the memory, "on the tip of my tongue," as we say, — thus at last I clutched it and drew it in.

There are certain proper names that have become thus polished on the handle; that is to say, on the initial syllable. Sometimes I suc-

ceed in getting them by working at the other end, and the final syllable drags in the unwilling first. My best reliance, however, is in the alphabet. By beginning at *a*, *b*, *c*, and going slowly down the letters, watching closely for the least sign of recognition, the smallest indication of that chemical affinity or magnetic attraction which the mental image of the person shows for its proper title when you come to its initial letter, I can commonly find the required proper name. Sometimes it happens that I have to give it up, for the moment, and by and by, when engaged about something else, it "comes to me," as the result of unconscious cerebration. I have an acquaintance named *Bonstead*, a most excellent dealer in some of the necessaries of life. If he had any idea how I have struggled with his name, I believe he would hardly consider it friendly conduct on his part not to go and have it changed. Now there is no assignable reason why this name should slip my memory more than others. It is, on the face of it, a name of good augury, and has been borne by admirable people. To another mind my own name, or that of the reader, would as likely be the erring one. And so of the few exceptional words cited above. Another memory will doubtless have entirely different examples. My explanation is that

these happen to be words of which, for some purely accidental reason, I got but a feeble hold when first encountered; so that, having slipped once, and again, and still again, they acquired the habit of slipping, and became permanently slippery.

THE ETHICS OF THE PLANK AT SEA

CONTRARY to my custom, I showed some verses — before the ink and my affection for them had taken the time to dry — to a critical friend. Now this lady's mind is so constructed that when you attack it with ever so casual a remark or question you never know what may happen. On this occasion what happened was a discussion in ethics. But I had better give the lines first of all : —

HIS NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF.

Black the storming ocean, crests that leap and whelm ;
Ship a tumbling ruin, stripped of spar and helm.
Now she shudders upward, strangled with a sea ;
Then she hangs a moment, and the moon breaks free
On her huddled creatures, waiting but to drown,
As she reels and staggers, ready to go down.

Crash ! the glassy mountain whirls her to her grave.
In the foam three struggle ; one his love will save.
There 's a plank for two, but, as he lifts her there,
Lo ! his rival sinking ; eyes that clutch despair.
Only a swift instant left him to decide, —
Shall he drown, and yield the other life and bride ?

In the peaceful morning stays a snowy sail.
Two afloat, — one missing. Which one? Did he fail, —
Coward, merely man? Or did the great sea darken eyes
All divinely shining with self-sacrifice?

I waited while she read them. Then I waited while she read them again. Then there was a pause, and I said, "Well?" Then there was more pause, during which the mercury of my estimate of the verses slowly sank. Then I said, humbly, "I *did* think of sending them to The Magazine."

"Yes," said she slowly. (The mercury continued to go down.) "But I don't believe in the ethics of it."

"Is *that* all?" said I brightly.

"Is that *all?*" said she darkly.

"Well, then," said I, humbled again, "what is wrong with the ethics? Instance me, good shepherd."

"In the first place," she was good enough to explain, "I don't like this handing a girl around as if she were a transferable piece of property. It is wrong, and what is worse, it is sentimental. Because, of course, the one whom, in a fair field, she loves is the one who has a right to her, and how can he give her up without sacrificing her, too?"

"But," said I, "the fact that she is his bride does not necessarily imply that she loves him best."

"Does n't it!" interjected she.

"At least we may suppose that in the case given the woman's affection or fancy — for it may as yet be only that — is evenly balanced between the two."

"Then," said she, "let his own love for her decide him. *That* he *knows*. He cannot know that the other loves her so well."

"But," still objected I, "suppose he is a very common-sense, hard-headed person, and his view of love is that, as a mere sentiment, it amounts to nothing; that the important question is, Whose love is likely to surround her with the most comfortable existence, the best opportunities, — in short, the greatest happiness? And suppose he is perfectly aware that he himself is the old, sad, and every way undesirable Doe, while the rival is the young, chipper, and every way desirable Roe."

"You talk," said she, "as if the man himself had no rights, no claims to happiness on his own account."

"Oh, but," said I, "must he not recognize as well the other's rights and claims, and 'love his neighbor as himself'?"

"But," she insisted, "not better than himself."

"Would you have him, then, make a cool calculation — on a plank at sea! — of the ex-

act relative values of himself and the other man, and adjudge the bride and the life to the most worthy?"

"I know," she replied, "that in all the small matters of daily intercourse it is the sweeter and more dignified course to give up, regardless of all question of who has the right, or which is the more worthy. But when it comes to the uttermost, when one's hold on life or on the thing that alone could make life valuable is at stake, why should not a rational mind look down upon the whole matter as might an unbiased inhabitant of Mars, and give the prize to him who has the most desert?"

"But," said I, "could even the most rational mind ever hope to be an unbiased judge of the relative claims of another and himself? And besides, supposing the two men are justly estimated as precisely equal in value, the world would still be the gainer for the first possessor's giving up the plank. In either case, it would have had a living man; but now it has the man *plus* the act of self-sacrifice. To save the other man instead of himself is not merely substituting x for x; it substitutes $x + y$. For my part, I must still hold to the ethics of $x + y$."

She let me have the last word, and there we left it.

THE MIND AS A BAD PORTRAIT PAINTER

Most people seem to experience an odd difficulty in realizing that the very greatest personages of the past ever were young. Yet this conception is necessary, if we wish to see them as they really were, and not according to the text-books and other sources of illusory tradition. Milton, for instance: who does not think of him habitually as the "blind old bard"? To test this, let any one arrange to have the name brought suddenly before the attention at an odd moment, and see what kind of image presents itself to the imagination in response to the word. Ten to one it will prove to be a venerable but sightless and piteous figure; a confused mixture of several superimposed images, of which the most prominent may be some dolorous frontispiece engraving of a stoop-shouldered bust, or the blind, pathetic form in Munkacsy's vivid group. It needs but an instant's reflection to see that this is a very inadequate and unfortunate conception of the actual Milton in his best days. True, he

was both old and blind when the two Paradises were committed to paper, but not when they were first conceived in his creative brain. And what of that long period of his middle manhood, when he was not only poet, but statesman and diplomate and terrible fighter for free thought and free government, — an erect, active figure, as full of force and fire as any trooper of them all? What of the still earlier days, when the beautiful young fellow charmed the hearts of man and maid, "cunning at fence," of the literal sort, as well as in all the elegant intricacies of Italian sonneteering and polished statecraft? For my part, I like best to remember the outward aspect of Milton as he appears in Vertue's engraving from the Onslow portrait at the age of twenty-one, — a jocund youngster, with laughing dark gray eyes and fresh, manly face; full of the sap so soon to mature into the tough oak that helped — he more than almost any man, if we consider his having been both brain and pen to Cromwell, besides his own incessant prose polemics on the side of freedom — to wrestle out our modern liberties in that fierce tug of the Great Revolution. It was at just the time of this lovely boy portrait that he was writing to his college mate: —

"Festivity and poetry are not incompatible.

Why should it be different with you? But, indeed, one sees the triple influence of Bacchus, Apollo, and Ceres in the verses you have sent me. And then, have you not music, — the harp lightly touched by nimble hands, and the lute giving time to the fair ones as they dance in the old tapestried room? Believe me, where the ivory keys leap and the accompanying dance goes round the perfumed hall, there will the song-god be."

The teachers of literature might well make some effort to rehabilitate these misimagined worthies of the past, to remove from them the disguises of age and senility that a too reverent tradition has thrown about them, and to present them in that bloom of manhood belonging to the period of their greatest activity. If I were a Professor of Literature, I should desire to hang my lecture-room with pictures, — not of the old traditional and forbidding decrepitudes, but of Milton, for example, as the charming young swordsman, with velvet cloak tossed on the ground and rapier in hand; of Homer, no longer blind and prematurely agonized, as it were, with our modern perplexities in finding him a birthplace, but as the splendid young Greek athlete, limbed and weaponed like his own youthful vision of Apollo, as

"Down he came,
Down from the summit of the Olympian mount,
Wrathful in heart; his shoulders bore the bow
And hollow quiver; there the arrows rang
Upon the shoulders of the angry god,
As on he moved. He came as comes the night,
And, seated from the ships aloof, sent forth
An arrow; terrible was heard the clang
Of that resplendent bow."

I would tamper with even such venerated traditional dignities as Mrs. Barbauld, for the sake of their own rehabilitation in the eyes of misguided youth. She should no longer frown formidable behind the stately prænomen of "Letitia;" she should be given back her true girl-name of "Nancy," and be represented, after her own account, as lithely and blithely climbing an apple-tree. Pythagoras should be a gracious stripling, crowned with ivy buds and stretched at a pretty goat-girl's feet, touching delicately the seven-stringed lyre. Even Moses might be shown as a buxom and frolicsome boy, shying stones at the crocodiles. Only Shakespeare, of all the pantheon, would need no change. His eternal youthfulness has been too much for the text-books and the monument-makers, and we always seem to conceive him as the fresh-hearted and full-forced man he really was.

THE FELT LOCATION OF THE "I"

I SUPPOSE everybody has tried, first or last, to make out just where he feels himself to be situated in himself. When the finger is pinched, it is plainly enough not *I* that am pinched, but my finger; and the same is true of a hurt in any part of the body. Notwithstanding the fact that the great controlling nerve-centres are in the brain, I have never been able to discover that a headache felt any nearer *me* than a finger-ache. Perhaps the nearest approach I have known to a sense of closeness, or to a veritable *me*-ache, has been a sharp pain in the stomach, especially when, on one occasion, I was struck in that region by a baseball bat, which slipped from the hand of the striker.

But there is one point concerning our felt location which I think we all are sure of. It is the one brought out so deliciously by the dear little girl in "Punch." "You ought to tie your own apron-strings, Mabel!" says one of those irresistible young women of Du Maurier's. "How can I, aunty?" is the reply. "I 'm in front, you know!"

This is a shrewd observation in minute psychology. The spinal chord runs along the back, with all its ganglia; the weight of the brain is well behind; yet *we* are not there. In other words, the curious thing is that we feel ourselves to be, not in the region where impressions are received and answered in the brain and spinal cord, but where they first meet the nerve-extremities. We seem to inhabit not the citadel, but the outer walls. At the point of peripheral expansion of the nerves of sense, where the outer forces begin to be apprehended by us as inner, — "in front," where the fingers feel, and the nose smells, and the eyes see, — there, if anywhere, we find ourselves to be.

I have often been interested to notice whereabouts on our bodily surface another animal looks to find us. The man, or even the little child, looks at the face. Is it because the voice issues thence? Yet it is the eyes, rather than the mouth, that is watched. Is it because the expression, the signal station for the changing moods, is there more than elsewhere? A dog, also, invariably looks up into the face. So does a bird, notwithstanding the fact that the food comes from the hand. Why does he not consider the "I," so far as his needs are concerned, to lie in the part that feeds him? But no; he cocks his head to one side, and directs

his lustrous little eye straight to our own, in order to establish what communion he can with the very *him* of his master and friend.

It is hardly less pathetic than our own human efforts to pierce, by the searching penetration of the eyes, to the real personality of each other. We never succeed. We utter our imperfect articulate sounds to each other's ears, but we do not look thither. It is still at the appealing and dumbly yearning eyes that we gaze, and go away baffled and sorrowful at last.

WHAT IS THE OLDEST THING IN THE WORLD?

The human mind is pretty hard to suit. It gets tired of old things, but when everything in the environment seems brand-new it experiences a still more profound dissatisfaction. Then an inveterate craving for something ancient asserts itself. Thus we are as "difficult" as the boarding-house boy of whom my bachelor friend tells me: when they help him to syrup on his buckwheat cake, and ask with fond solicitude, "Do you want it drizzle-drozzle or crinkle-crankle?" he responds only with a vague scowl; and when the honeyed stream descends in the latter form he whines, "You *knew* I wanted it drizzle-drozzle!"

When the hunger for something good and old is strong upon us, we Americans are driven to cross the ocean in search of it. But even in the old countries it is not everything that can satisfy us. A comrade of mine, who has been roaming up and down Europe, writes me that "Nürnberg is the only city that really keeps its promise of seeming old." When we

cannot conveniently travel for it, this periodical want of the flavor of antiquity sends us to the Old Curiosity Shops. We accumulate old truck of various sorts. Worm-eaten furniture may for the moment soothe our madness. Moss-grown and tumble-down houses become captivating to our fancy. We are even patient of old jokes. We seek the society of the elders, and hear with constantly renewed pleasure their castanean anecdotes. We refuse to read any book that has a clean new cover. The gleam of fresh paint vexes our eyes, as we walk along the rows of spick-span houses. Even our letter-paper must have torn and ragged edges, as if we had found it in our great-grandmother's portfolio, in a chest in the garret.

This hankering is itself an old trait. Infallible Bartlett, in that volume of inexhaustible interest to those who like to turn over the quintessential distillations of the wit and wisdom of all times, — the "Familiar Quotations," — gives quaint illustrations of it under the head of "Old wood to burn, old wine to drink, old friends to trust!" It was this same mood that made Dan Chaucer assert (as everybody remembers, but as nobody resents hearing over again, — it is, would say our friend the Judge, "so deliciously wrong"), —

> "For out of the old fieldes, as men saithe,
> Cometh al this new corne fro yere to yere,
> And out of olde bookes, in good faithe,
> Cometh al this new science that men lere."

Yet, in the form in which we feel it in this country, this hunger for the old is one of the six or seven thousand traits which our British cousins find it difficult to comprehend. We cross the sea to find a cathedral that is truly ancient, and they point us with pride to this summer's restorations; but while the group stands admiring them, the American slides away quietly, and "slips behind a tomb," or is found rapt on some dear unrestored nook of the ivied cloister. Just so it is on the Continent: Paris is always too wonderfully new and shining, as if Orpheus had strummed it up only this very morning from entirely new materials. My favorite spot is in the Louvre, between the five-footed bull of Assyria and the rose-colored granite sarcophagus of Rameses III. The Hague is delightfully swept-up and washed-down and immaculately fresh and resplendent; but my best moment there was when, in the museum, I took in my hand a gold coin of Alexander, and as it lay cool and smooth in my palm I thought it was probably one that the conqueror himself flung ringing against the

tub-staves of Diogenes, the day that worthy growled at him to "get out of his sunshine."

Sometimes the question has presented itself, What is the very oldest thing in the world that was seen by the men of yore and is still visible to us? What is the object, or line, or point, which we can now behold, that was gazed on by human eyes farthest back in antiquity? It is certainly not to be looked for in this country. We are ridiculously new. It was only the other day that Columbus discovered us, and it was but a little while previous that, as red Indians, we had appeared on the scene; not long enough, obviously, to have thinned out the deer and partridges. As mound-builders, we had only a short time before thrown up our queer constructions for the puzzling of the antiquaries. The very soil here under me, as I write, is painfully recent. It was but a few thousand years ago that some sportive glacier came capering down from the Pole, and plastered it, in the shape of rock-meal, over our bare sandstones. Over in the Sierra Nevadas, it is true, I lay one sunshiny afternoon along a gleaming slope of the primeval granite, and cooled my cheek against its ice-planed polish, and admitted that here at last was something pretty old. Yet "rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun" as was this gigantic adamantine couch, there was

a still older thing playing at that very moment about us. It was the mountain wind. I could put out my hand to it, and reflect that it might have been this very identical breath of air that bubbled up through the sea when the towers of Atlantis went down; or it may have flickered the flame on Abel's altar. "You need not," I might have said to it, "think to palm yourself off as a freakish young zephyr, just born of yonder snow-streak and the sun-warmed rock; you have been roaming this planet ever since its birth. You have whirled in cyclones, and danced with the streamers of the aurora; it was you that breathed Job's curses, and the love-vows of the first lover that was ever forsworn."

But there is still an older thing to link us with the earliest of our race: it is the nightly procession of the stars. How old are the names of these familiar constellations? Ptolemy gives a list of forty-eight of them; and some were certainly known to Homer and to the eldest of the Hebrew writers. Is it an utterly wild speculation that they may be so ancient as to have once fairly represented the outlines of the bears and lions, archers and hunters, whose names they carry? The stars, we know, are forever shifting their relative positions, if only a few hair's-breadths every thou-

sand years. Now the Scorpion is still a fairly suggestive scorpion, and Draco a tolerable dragon, winding his scaly length about the Little Bear. May it not be that Ursa Major took his name so many æons ago that he was then a veritable ursine figure, instead of the later Wain and the Great Dipper of our own day? Let not the severe scientist frown at this fancy of a mere literary man. Let him keep his temper, remembering the dictum of that other and more solemn literary man who averred that only "the undevout astronomer gets mad," or words more or less to that effect.

At least we may have the satisfaction of feeling, when we look up at the stars, that our eyes are fastened on the very oldest things we know of in the world. We can be sure that human eyes traced out, night after night, those very lines, — squares, triangles, rings, the arrow of the Archer, the wings of the Swan, the scales of the Balance, the "bands of Orion," — longer ago than in the case of any shapes and forms that our eyes can now behold; unless it be the wrinkled visage of the Man in the Moon, or the fiery circle of the sun itself.

THE FREE WILL OF THE BONFIRE

As we pass away from the period of childhood, most of its wonderful sights lose their fascination. To experienced and disillusioned middle age it almost seems that nothing is any longer wonderful, except perhaps the fact that nothing is any longer wonderful. But for my own part, as I go on in life, I find that two or three of the child's great spectacles still keep for me their freshness. One of these is the elephant leading the circus procession through the village street. I never could see it enough, that huge, unearthly shape, moving solemnly along; flapping its wings of ears not for common and mundane fly-guards, but in some mysterious gesture or ceremonial; bending its architectural legs in the wrong place; waving its trunk in incantation; seeing none of the trivial street matters to right or left, but absorbed in Oriental dreams. I used to think it strange that people who were rich enough should not have one always pacing about their own back yards.

Another of these spectacles of childhood

that keeps its charm for me is the locomotive at full speed. Momentum is but a word in a book, except when I stand as near as I dare to the clattering rails, and take the fearful joy of seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, so to speak, with the trembling antennæ of my mind, the thunderous rush of the iron mass as it reaches me, and is gone. A different and calmer pleasure is to watch the train from a half mile's distance across the fields, — how *slick* is its slipping along, "without haste, without rest," as if independently of any propelling force; for it is the train that appears to run the driving-wheels, not the driving-wheels the train. It is not momentum now, but the inertia of motion; not a missile or projectile, hurled from behind or drawn from before, but a thing whose state of speed is as natural and immutable as to other things the state of rest. Only I never can make the forward motion of the engine itself appear steady and uniform. To my eye there is some optical illusion by which the rushing and whizzing creature seems incessantly to hang for the smallest fraction of a second, then leap forward, then hang again; and so, by alternate infinitesimal checks and boundings ahead, to fly on its swift way.

But the sight in which I still take the most childlike delight is the spring bonfire. Just

about the time that the cherry-trees are snowing out into full bloom; and the bluebirds, loveliest of feathered things, are talking about nesting-boxes in gentle, irresolute voices, soft as their breasts and their flight; and the first round clouds are rolling across a deeper azure than has yet appeared; and some merry maid, herself freshly blossomed out in a sprigged spring gown, comes in triumphant with the first arbutus, then the sound of the rake is heard in the land. The offending sticks and straws of last year's garden life are gathered together into dry and light-tossed piles. Now the eager child is permitted, if he is good, the untold felicity of setting off the bonfire. There is

> "The quick, sharp scratch
> And blue spurt of a lighted match,"

the instant's breathless suspense while the first pungency of the vaporous odor steals out, the sere sticks keeping at least some fragrant memory of the past summer within them, and giving up this last ghost in reluctant and wavering smoke. It is fairly lighted, and now in a moment blows in freshly the favoring gale that all flames and other aspiring spirits call to themselves out of whatever depth of stagnation around them, and "up leaps and out springs" the crimson, the orange, the scarlet, the vividly

flame-colored flame. Always out of soft sheaths of brown smoke the blades of fire dart upward, in curves, and bounding whirls and spirals, and sudden sidelong sword-thrusts. Would it not all seem the very quintessence of voluntary, self-impelled aspiration upward and away from earth? In sober scientific verity, however, what is at the bottom of all that swift and buoyant skyward impulse? It is no life within; it is all force from without. Atmospheric pressure is the plain prose of it. It is a pretty illusion, but there is really no heavenward striving in the flame. It leaps and bounds upward in beautiful freedom, but it is only — oh, the inexorable fact! — that the weight of the heavier air around it squeezes the flame out of its way in helpless obedience to gravity. And so an uneasy question creeps into the mind, namely, this: If these leaping crests of the flame, these upflung wings, so eager and mad to rise that flame shreds away from flame in the upward rush, leaving detached waves of fire hanging free of the crimson column, and flickering an instant by themselves, — if this is all but the illusory aspect of inert matter under the pressure of outside circumstance, what may we think of our own semblance of free will and aspiration? As we look from the flame to the man, must we say, "So he"? Is each appar-

ently spontaneous out-thrust of free impulse nothing but a blind result of the composition of forces surrounding us in the world?

If this would seem a dolorous doubt, it has, on second thought, another and more comfortable side. If wills were perfectly free of outside influence, what a jostle and shock of chaotic impulses! It would be like a starry universe in which gravity had fallen asleep, all the planets gone mad and become comets, and every comet an egoistic and resistless force bent on universal destruction. It is curious to consider that, unless the human will were controlled by outside forces, — influenced, at least, and is not every influence to that extent a control? — it would be impossible to sway any friend for good, impossible to *be* swayed by any friend for good, since the influencing will is but an outside force to any other will. What would become of education, training, all loving ministrations of gentle control, if every child's own choice and every evil passion's propulsion were a supreme free force, a blind flame, leaping hither and thither at its own impulse? Free will? — it seems our most priceless possession. Fate? — it seems our deadliest foe. But when we go to another human soul, with some confidence that we may win it to forego an evil opportunity, and to take the better and

wiser path, it is because we rely on being able to step, ourselves, into the chain of controlling forces surrounding that other will, and so to become its fate, or some small segment of its fate, as against its own free will. I feel that I am free, and I delight to feel it ; but I know that there is at this moment approaching me, unseen, on the train, or across the ocean, or down the street, a friend whose will, an outside force to me, shall bend me this way or that by a word. And at this fact, too, how can I but rejoice? — although I recognize plainly enough that the more I am loved by any spirit wiser and stronger than my own, the less I shall be free. That as yet unspoken word, I know, is but one among ten million converging forces, in the centre of which my will vibrates and quivers in delicate response to each electric thrill of influence. If it were not so, again, how could one take measures against the questionable possibilities of his own future self? If my will, at a given hour of next year or ten years hence, is to be a free and uncontrollable impulse, what use for me to legislate for it to-day?

And there is one other and final consolation in that bugbear of a thought that the leaping flame is but the slave of the crowding air : it is from the reflection that, whether it be safe or

not for universal exoteric doctrine, "the evil that we do" not only "lives after us;" it lived before us. The seeds of it were sown within us from without, like the meteoric dust that may have brought the germs of foul weeds upon a virgin planet. Evil deeds, evil thoughts, they are all of the nature of an *influenza*, — an *influence*, or a convergence of a multitude of such. For the moment, if only for the moment, we break away from the sane sense of personal responsibility, and, turning on the ghost of our bad deed, we cry, "Thou canst not say *I* did it!" And yet —

THE INVISIBLE PART OF THIS WORLD WE LIVE IN: A TALK TO SCHOOL-CHILDREN

I WANT to talk to you a few minutes this afternoon about the invisible part of this world we are living in. I did not say that I meant to talk about *the* invisible world, for by that you would have thought I was going to speak of some far-off, unintelligible matters, wholly distinct from the world around us with which we are familiar. But what I want to remind you of is this: that there is a great portion of this wonderful world of ours which we scarcely ever think about, because it is invisible, and yet which is just as real and just as near to all of us as these desks and books and clothes. There are forces and motions here which would be astounding and frightful, if we could fairly realize them, without at the same time appreciating the supreme order by which they are all controlled.

To begin with, here are a great many cubic feet of oxygen and nitrogen, mixed together into a transparent fluid which we call air, across

whose invisible waves the sounds you are listening to are being carried to your ears like ripples; a fluid so delicate and fine that it is penetrating our lungs, each breath passing over to the blood its little burden of life-giving oxygen, yet so vast in extent, reaching up as it does above the clouds, that its weight in this room is equal to many tons. Suppose one of you were lying on the floor yonder with a huge rock weighing two thousand pounds crushing him down; we should all be horrified. Yet this invisible air is pressing every one of our bodies with a force of more than two thousand pounds. Why is it, then, that we are not crushed? It is for the same reason that the fish is able to sink with safety to a depth in the sea where it sustains a mass of water above it of many tons' weight. The body of the fish is covered with minute pores, little threadlike openings, which admit the water to the inside of every part, and so the pressure from within balances that from without. Just as if I take a pane of glass in the window and press hard against it with my hand, — of course it will give way and be broken. But if I reach my arm out of the window and press at the same time with the other hand equally hard against the outside of the pane, the pressure will be exactly balanced and the glass will remain un-

broken. In the same way, the pores and cavities of our bodies allow the air to penetrate every part, and the pressure is just as great from within as from outside, and we are therefore wholly unconscious of it. So that we walk about, balancing upon our heads, as it were, this vast burden of thousands of pounds, without ever thinking of its existence.

Again, consider the force which the earth is exerting to bind everything fast to its surface. Suppose we should fix an iron ring into the wall yonder, and, getting a firm hold of it, should attempt to lift the wall, with the roof, a foot or an inch. You know, of course, what would prevent our budging it a hair's breadth, — simply the attraction of gravitation ; words easily spoken, but how rarely appreciated! Here is something going on between the wall and the earth which defies our strength to have the least effect on it. We can see nothing there except the lifeless, motionless wood and stone resting on the equally lifeless ground. We may peep under the foundations, but we can find nothing gluing the stone and the ground together. Yet there is this enormous attraction, reaching up like a gigantic hand from the earth's centre, holding everything down with a grip of iron. What we call the heaviest things, stone and lead and so on, are

only the things which this unseen hand grips the firmest. Some of the lightest substances, feathers for instance, seem to elude its grasp, but it is only because the air buoys them up, as a stick is buoyed up on the water. Exhaust the air from a glass vessel with the air-pump, and the feather falls like lead.

But here in this little lump of glass is another startling force, all the time at work. We can see as we hold it up only a transparent mass; but inside here, embracing every particle, from the centre to the circumference, is a power at work which would defy the stoutest arms in the room to overcome. Suppose you grasp each side and try to pull it in two. Why is it that you might tug with might and main, and yet make no impression on it whatever? You answer, of course, that it is the attraction of cohesion, — another very easy word to say, but a very amazing thing if we could only fairly get hold of it with our minds. Suppose we take a small bar of iron as big as your wrist, and having fixed one end firmly to the floor or the ground, let a horse be fastened by a chain to the other end, and undertake to pull the bar in two. When you saw the strong animal plunging and straining every muscle in vain, it would impress you with an idea of great power. But there in the little bar would

be the far greater power, — a little goblin, as it were, sitting inside the iron, and knotting its particles together with the strength of twenty horses; a little sleepless, motionless goblin, sitting there wholly invisible, exerting every instant the force of a giant. All around us, in the boards of the floor, in the wood of your desks, in the bones of your arms and fingers, we find this strange force, griping atom to atom, so that you may lay your hand on the commonest lump of stone or iron, and think it is a very ordinary object you are touching, while right under the palm of your hand there is at work a concealed power sufficient to make an earthquake, if it were only so applied.

But if these unseen *forces* are wonderful, what shall we say of the *motions* that are taking place here in the room? You all seem to be sitting here in your chairs quietly enough, yet the fact really is that you are flying through space at the rate of more than a thousand miles every minute. We go a thousand miles every hour with the earth's motion round its own axis, and 68,000 miles every hour in its yearly flight round the sun. It is just as if we were to glue some wee bit of an insect to the side of a ball, and hurl the ball with all our might at some object. You know how it goes whirling round and on toward the mark at the same time, —

only we are being hurled with a motion a hundred times more rapid. Suppose I had a pistol here, and should fire it at the wall yonder; the bullet would sing through the air with such swiftness that you would perceive no interval between the bang of the powder and the thud of the lead in the plaster. Yet we are this moment whizzing off to the eastward swifter than the pistol ball. You look out of the window and see the snowy line of the Sierras on the horizon, and before I have had time to speak the words we have reached the point in space where those white summits were as I began this sentence, and are already spinning on far beyond. It is hard to realize this, and do you see why? It is because we are used to thinking of rapid motion as something that makes the air rush against our faces, while stationary objects appear to be passing behind us as we go; whereas in this case we have no stationary objects at our side, and the air, instead of blowing against us, sticks fast to the earth and flies along with us. If for an instant the atmosphere could be stopped while the earth went on, there would be suddenly such a blast of wind as would crush this building to the ground like the crushing of an egg-shell.

But it is in ourselves, after all, that we may find the most wonderful things in the world. A

microcosm, the old sages used to call man, — a word which those of you who are studying Greek know means a little world ; meaning by that that man contains in himself in miniature all the forces and elements of the whole world. A human body, if you will only think of it, is all made up of wonderful forces. Consider the mechanism which is incessantly pumping blood through our arteries and veins. You see a person sitting quietly in his seat, and you would never suspect that such a piece of machinery was working away inside of him. But there is the heart, pump-pump-pumping away, day and night, sending in each hour many gallons of blood through our systems. And as you may see if you watch the circulation in a bat's wing under the microscope, the blood does not creep slowly along, as we are apt to imagine, but the red streams go darting swift as an arrow along their slender channels, — into the limbs, down to the finger-ends and the feet, and back again to the wonderful pumping heart.

Then the muscular force, — what a strange thing that is! Here is this book lying here, — the whole earth, through the attraction of gravitation, is pulling upon that book, tons of solid planet holding it down ; and here is my arm, a mere piece of bone with a cord of flesh covering it, — just such red flesh and white bone as

we see lying powerless in the butcher shops, — and all I have to do is to call into action the muscular force, and up comes the book, in spite of the whole earth's resistance. The brain recalls to itself this invisible force, and how quickly the earth snatches the book back!

Consider, too, what is called the assimilating power in our bodies. That is, the power which takes up food and digests it and changes it into flesh and bone. Here is a strange, invisible force in each of us, which takes a little bread and meat, and in a few hours' time makes it into muscle and brain. There would seem to be no similarity between a loaf of bread and a man's strength, yet this hidden power actually changes one into the other. The hungry soldier, who has marched a long day without food, and is ready to lie down tired out, and wishing the war were over, has his good cup of coffee and his beefsteak, and out of them this invisible assimilating power makes for him strength and courage, and he gets up stout and cheery, ready to hurrah for the President, and to defeat any amount of rebel battalions. Every moment these vital forces in our bodies are at work, repairing the waste that is incessantly going on. So that if we could see what is to our eyes invisible, we should behold in man as the ultimate skeleton,

not a bundle of motionless bones, but a living fountain of forces, streaming from the brain along the intricate web-work of the nerves, so rapid as to seem a mere flash of incessant motion from head to foot.

But if these vital forces of the body are wonderful, what are we to think of the invisible *mind?* Here in each of us is a marvelous thing: a thinking mind, a force that never pauses, which you cannot stop if you try. Try for a moment not to think, and your very idea of not thinking is a thought, followed in spite of you by some other thought. And here we reach what is really *man:* the body is nothing; horses have just such bodily powers as you and I; they digest food, and have muscles, and lungs, and eyes. But here in you and me there is something different, — an invisible something in us by which we can gain knowledge, and can understand the curious world we are living in. Here we can sit in this room, and by our minds we can go out of this room, and think about distant countries and distant times; can be glad or sorry about events and people of past times, long before we were born; can even go off away from this little planet Earth altogether, and occupy ourselves with far-off worlds, weighing the moon, or measuring the girth of Jupiter and Mars. And here

is the most difficult of all the invisible things to realize. We are all the time thinking of the bodies of men and women as their real selves. We say such a person is beautiful, or such a one ugly, or weak, when in reality the girl whose face happens to be homely may be most beautiful in spirit, and the boy who seems weak or deformed may in his real self, his mind, be the most vigorous and graceful of all of us. We treasure up photographs of our friends' faces as their likenesses, when really a letter they have written, or some generous action they have performed, is a much truer picture of them, because it shows us something of their real self, the invisible mind. When we look at a person's head, we do not see the real person. We only see a skull, made up for the most part of lime; and if we could peep under the skull, we should only see a ball of whitish substance called the brain; and we might search through and through and discover nothing of the wonderful mind. We must try to get rid of this idea that the body is the person. We must think of a man not as a body with a soul in it, but as a soul with a body round it. Perhaps we sometimes feel proud of some bodily superiority to others, or feel pained and hurt about some physical defect or awkwardness. But that is very foolish. It is just as if

you were traveling on horseback, and should meet some neighbor better mounted than you were: you would never think of being ashamed or feeling badly because he was riding a handsomer horse. And just so the mind is, as it were, mounted on the body, as a man is on a horse; and it ought to *govern* the body (which just now in this world happens to be carrying it about), just as the good rider does his steed. And as we laugh at a man who lets his horse run away with him, just so we ought to see that it is ridiculous for people to let their physical aches, and troubles, and pleasures run away with their minds.

You see we must get used to thinking of these invisible things as real, or we shall go through life without half appreciating what a beautiful world this is. We have no business to go about only half attending to what is all around us. Many people go through life as snails do, carrying their whole world on their backs; seeing and thinking of nothing except clothes and food, and their little daily circumstances of pleasure or trouble. If we mean to be anything higher than a sort of human snails, we must go about, not only with our *eyes* open, but with our *minds* open. We need to be constantly jogging ourselves on the elbow and reminding ourselves to notice this thing

and that, or else we are apt to forget the existence of everything except what is held up plainly before our eyes. We must be constantly recollecting that because a thing is invisible, it is none the less real. For instance, if we go out into the street now in broad daylight, and look up at the sky, we do not think of there being anything there above us except what we see, the blue sky and the white clouds. And yet we know, if we will only think of it, that even now overhead there are all the beautiful burning stars, Orion and the Pleiades and the Great Dipper, wheeling across the sky, just as fair and solemn as at midnight.

You know the earth is often spoken of as the common habitation of beasts and birds and men, all living in the same world. But think what a false idea this is! The spider only inhabits its little cobweb in the corner, seeing and knowing nothing beyond; while to us the whole world is given to live in. We look into the stones and rocks, and read there the history of our planet; we investigate the most hidden forces that are moving throughout nature; we are interested at the same moment in things in Virginia, in Europe, in Asia, — in the times of the Greeks, and of the Puritans, and of our own heroes of to-day. As the insect reaches out with its long tentacles and feels

about its little world, so we go feeling about with our restless minds, reaching out through the whole universe; down through the microscope into the invisible atoms and origins of all living things, up through the telescope among the boundless spaces where the only landmarks are the innumerable stars.

We must not feel, either, any of that dread of invisible things which is natural to ignorant people. You know that in very early ages of the world, when men were barbarous and ignorant, they invented all sorts of fables about evil spirits, and goblins, and ghosts, and all manner of such nonsense. They felt that there were forces in action all around them which they could not see and understand, and therefore they were afraid of them, and imagined various foolish terrors to be frightened at. It is just so with us sometimes when we lie awake in the dark: we have a feeling of dread, simply because we can't plainly *see* what is around us. But we must remember that it is simply our ignorance that makes us timid. If we could see things clearly just as they are, we should be wise enough to see that everything in the world is meant for our good, that so long as we go about with reverent hearts and pure minds, all the powers and forces of the world are on our side, guarding us from harm.

Even in the old ignorant times, we can see what a healthy, sunshiny sort of people the English were, from the fact that their mythology rather ran to benevolent fairies and "good folk," as they used to call their imaginary sprites, instead of the fierce demons which the coarse and brutal minds of some other peoples conjured up.

I don't think it is often that we find anything very well worth reading in newspapers; but I read a little incident in a newspaper a while ago which pleased me. It told about a little baby that was creeping about on the carpet one morning, when the sunshine was streaming in through the window, and lying broad and warm on the floor. The little child, after creeping around it for some minutes, laughing out its innocent delight at the sunbeam's cheerfulness and warmth, finally put its little mouth down and kissed it. And just so, I thought, we ought to feel toward all Nature, — we ought to *love* it, not fear it. The more broadly we live, and the more deeply we look into the kind, beautiful eyes of Nature, the more we shall feel that while we are pure and good the whole universe is in harmony with us, and all its vast forces, seen and unseen, are only so many guardian angels helping us along, — so many pleasant friends, helping us to be

wise and happy; our little aches and pains are only meant to teach us necessary lessons; and even if we die, it is only setting us free, leading us to some other even more beautiful world, of which we at least know this, as the old Roman emperor wrote, that whatever it is, we are sure there will be no lack of God there, to take care of us. The more we know of the things about us, and of each other, the better we shall understand, as Coleridge says, that

> "He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us
> He made and loveth all."

Education

SHOULD A COLLEGE EDUCATE?

N the "American language" (which is simply the most modern English) a *college* and a *university* are two different things. The terms are sometimes confounded, in loose popular speech, but the best usage in this country shows an increasing tendency toward a sharp distinction between them. A failure to apprehend this distinction clearly, and a consequent notion that a college is only a little university, or a university only a large college, has sometimes given rise to odd doctrine as to what a college should teach.

In their original signification the words are not widely different: the *universitas* signifying merely a "corporate whole," in law; the *collegium*, a "society of colleagues." But the term *university*, in its development in Europe and this country, and the term *college*, in its development in this country especially, have become widely differentiated. That which is properly called a university has its own distinct pur-

pose, and consequently its own proper methods and appliances. That which is properly called a college has a different purpose, and its methods and appliances are consequently entirely different.

Ideally, a *university* is a place where anybody may learn everything. And this, whether it be as knowledge, properly speaking, or as skill. Actually, however, as found existing at present (since few persons after leaving college wish to study beyond the requirements of a bread-occupation), a university consists of a central college, surrounded by a cluster of professional or technical schools, where special branches are pursued, chiefly with reference to some particular calling.

A *college*, on the other hand, is a place where young people, whatever their future occupation is to be, may first of all receive that more or less complete development which we call a "liberal education."[1]

[1] In one or two instances our state charters have employed these terms, *university* and *college*, in such a way as to confuse any rational or usual distinction between them. The State of California, for instance, has a "University of California," consisting of a College of Letters, a College of Agriculture, a College of Mining, etc. Of these only the College of Letters answers to the accepted sense of the term "college," the others being what are more properly called professional or technical "schools."

The character of the college course, then, should be determined purely with reference to the distinct purpose of the college. The human mind being many-sided, the college undertakes to aid its development on all the lines of its natural growth. The tendency of modern life, moreover, with its extreme division of labor, being to force one or two powers of the mind at the expense of the rest, the aim of the college is to forestall this one-sided effect by giving the whole man a fair chance beforehand. While the special or professional schools of the university provide that a person may go as far as possible on some one line of knowledge, which constitutes his specialty,[1] or of that com-

The use of the words at Cambridge (U. S.) illustrates their almost universal application in this country: "Harvard *University*" consisting (in the language of the annual catalogue) of "Harvard *College*, the Divinity *School*, the Law *School*, the Lawrence Scientific *School*," etc.

[1] The Johns Hopkins University, at Baltimore, furnishes one example, in this country, of a "university" in somewhat the sense of the term as used abroad. It does not, it is true, exclude college work, but it maintains chairs of original research, and at the same time provides advanced instruction for graduate students on special lines of study, other than those of the usual professional schools. It is to be hoped that the fact of its carrying on undergraduate college work does not indicate any danger of its being checked in its full career, through some possible unripeness of its public for its

bination of knowledge and skill which constitutes his profession, the college provides that he shall get such a complete possession of himself — in all his powers: mind, body, and that total of qualities known as "character" — as is essential to the highest success in any specialty or profession whatever. He may get this broad preparation elsewhere than in college. It may come through private study. It may come sometimes — but only to men of extraordinary endowments — from the discipline of life itself. But to the ordinary man, the "average man," it comes most surely and most easily through a college course. Once having it, from one source or another, a man no doubt fits himself best to serve the world by perfecting his knowledge and skill in some single direction; but without some such broad preliminary development, some such "liberal education," he will fail not only of his best possible special work, but — what is worst of all — he will assuredly fail of that best service which any man can do for the community, the living in it, whatever his profession, as a complete and roundly moulded man. He will fail (to use Mr. Spencer's excellent phrase) of "complete living." He will have entered the world

more advanced work, and warped toward an ordinary university with a college and professional schools only.

without being equipped for that great common profession, the profession of living — underneath and above his particular calling — the intellectual life.

But (it may be asked) why may not the university, through some one of its special schools, furnish this culture without the need of a college? Because a man is too complex an organism to get complete growth in any single region of study, or by any one line of exercises.

But, at least (it may further be asked), might not the ideal university, with its whole circle of knowledges, professional and otherwise, give this complete culture? In other words, why should not the college add to its course all kinds of knowledges, and so itself become an ideal university, where anybody might learn everything? It is the theory implied in this question that produces the tendency toward unlimited "electives" in the college course. There should be no difficulty in seeing why this is an irrational tendency, however attractive it may seem at first sight to the public. It is irrational because the time actually given to college study is no more than four years; in this time only a few subjects can be studied; and the very essence of the function of the college is, therefore, that it should select among the numberless possible subjects those which

promise the greatest educating force. For we reach, at this point in the discussion, a fact that underlies the whole system of any right education — a fact persistently ignored by many persons having to do with educational affairs, particularly in the lower schools and in remote communities, and on the ignorance of which no end of educational blunders have been built. It is the fact that, while every possible knowledge and skill is useful for one purpose or another, *not all are equally useful for the purposes of education.* The college, therefore, must select such studies as are most useful for its own purposes. So far as the university undertakes to prescribe any such general or culture course, it becomes a college. So far as the college forgets to do this, in deference to notions of a "practical" training, or of the magnificence of a great cloud of electives, it does not become a university — for that, in the nature of the case, is impossible; but it fails of its true function as a college, and is no longer either the one thing or the other.

The ideal of a great university where anybody might learn everything has a peculiar charm for the imagination. Bacon sketched the large outlines of such an establishment in his "New Atlantis;" and ever since his day we have come to see more and more clearly

that knowledge does indeed make prosperity, whether for peoples or for individuals. Nothing can be more charming, then, than the thought of a great central institution where the last word on every subject might be heard; where the foremost scientist in every science, the foremost craftsman in every handicraft, should impart the entirety of his acquisitions or his dexterity to all who cared to seek it. Such a university ought, it would seem, to be accessible to every community in this modern world.

But all this would not give us a college. That we have only when we have a company of competent scholars providing a course of general preliminary training; a course selected with reference to its particular end of producing broadly educated men. The university, taking the man as he is, would propose to leave him as he is, except for the acquisition of a certain special knowledge or skill. The college, taking the youth as he is, proposes to make of him something that he is not. It proposes no less a miracle, in fact, than the changing of a crude boy into an educated man. A miracle, — yet every day sees it more and more successfully performed.

An educated man — what is it that we understand by the phrase? If it would not be

easy to set down all that it connotes in our various minds, we should probably agree that it includes, among other things, such qualities as these: a certain largeness of view; an acquaintance with the intellectual life of the world; the appreciation of principles; the power and habit of independent thought; the freedom from personal provincialism, and the recognition of the other point of view; an underlying nobleness of intention; the persistence in magnanimous aims. If there has not yet been found the system of culture which will give this result every time and with all sorts of material, it may at least be asserted that a course of study — whether in college or out — somewhat corresponding to the course pursued at our best colleges has a visible tendency to produce this result. Whether it might be produced, also, by some entirely different course is certainly a question not to be rashly answered in the negative. All we can say is, that any course which has as yet been proposed as a substitute has proved, on experiment, to have serious defects in comparison with it. Our wisest plan is to hold fast what we already know to be good studies, making further experiments with candor and fairness; avoiding, on the one hand, the timid pre-judgments of those who are afraid of all that is not ancient and

established, and, on the other hand, the crude enthusiasms of those half-educated persons who think that nothing old can be good, and nothing new can be bad.

Two principal proposals of change in the college course have been made. One is that the modern languages should be substituted for the ancient. So far as the complete substitution has been tried, most observers would probably agree that the experiment has failed. In other words, more persons are found to have studied modern languages without having become "educated" persons by that means than are found to have studied the classics without that result. College observers, unbiased by any personal interest as teachers on either side, would probably be found nearly unanimous as to this point. Without discussing the question theoretically here, we would only insist upon this: that, so far as any change of this kind is made, it be made only on the ground of greater serviceableness for purely educational purposes, as being better fitted to "educe the man" — the only test of studies with which the college has anything whatever to do. Probably Mill's answer, or counter-question, will eventually be found the wisest one as between the classical and the modern languages and literatures: "Why not both?"

The other principal proposal of change is the substitution of natural science in place of the "humanities." To the addition of a certain amount of natural science, enough, certainly, to impart its admirable methods of research, and, what is more, its admirable spirit of uncompromising adhesion to the exact truth, no one is likely to object. But when it is proposed to make any radical substitution of the material studies for the human studies, making courses (as has been done) without Latin, Greek, Literature, Logic, Philosophy, Ancient History, etc., supplying their places with the natural sciences, it is well to consider carefully, first, the results of the experiment so far as it has been tried; and, secondly, certain well-established principles concerning the human mind in its relation to studies. As to ascertained results, it is to be said that for some time now there have been, in several of our institutions of learning, courses having these contrasted characters running side by side. We will not here offer any testimony of our own as to the comparative results of the two in the production of broadly educated men. We would only suggest to those who are in any doubt upon the matter, or who have any radical change of college courses in view, to look into the results of the experiment for

themselves, and to take the testimony of those who have had opportunity to observe them. The effect of such an examination will be likely to produce hearty agreement with an editorial writer in a late number of "Science," who remarks that "the introduction of scientific studies in our educational systems has not brought about the millennium which was expected." Much good, no doubt, they have done, when introduced in proper proportion. Their methods have certainly influenced favorably the methods of the older studies. But, after all, we come back to the truth that, of the two groups of studies, both indispensable, the humanities furnish the greater growth-power for the mind, because they are the product and expression of mind.[1]

It cannot be too carefully kept in view that, in any such comparison of the natural sciences with the humanities, we take into account only

[1] Sometimes we hear the curious remark made, perhaps by one of the weaker brethren among those very useful persons, the dealers in second-hand science (Popular Science), that the book of nature is the expression of the mind of God, while other books only express the mind of man. But it does not require great acumen to perceive that the mind of man and all its productions are also the work and the expression of the same Author — his Bible, one might say, to carry on the figure, while material nature is only his spelling-book.

their educational value. The sensitive loyalty of scientific men to their specialties, a very pleasant thing to see, sometimes seems to blind them to this distinction between intrinsic values and educational values. They should remember that no slight upon the intrinsic value of any science is implied in the doubt as to its comparative educational value. There are many things of enormous usefulness to the world in other ways, whose examination could contribute next to nothing toward the development of mind. Iron, for example, constitutes almost the framework of civilization; but this does not at all imply that metallurgy, as a college study, would have any considerable educating force. On the other hand, there are many subjects of study whose application to the ordinary business of life might seem very remote indeed, yet whose power to "educe the man" is found to be very great. The calculus, or the Antigone, might never be of any "use" to the man, in the superficial sense of the word, yet they might have been the very meat and drink of his intellectual growth. The natural sciences may well be satisfied with the crowns of honor the world must always give them for their royal contributions to our mental and material existence, without expecting to be made exclusively, also, our nurses and school-

masters. The fitness for those humbler but necessary functions must be determined wholly on other grounds than that of value, however priceless it be, to the world for other purposes. Both experiment and reflection seem to point more and more decisively to the view that mind, on the whole, grows chiefly through contact with mind. And accordingly, what are called the liberal courses of study, formed largely of those studies which bring to the student the magnetic touch of the human spirit in its dealings with life, seem to show more vitalizing power, — seem actually to produce, on experiment, more broadly educated men than what may be called the illiberal courses, formed without these human studies. Yet here, again, "Why not both?" is the best solution, so far as we can effect it. For the natural sciences have, undeniably, certain admirable influences in education. They are free from any encouragement of morbid moods. They teach the mind to "hug its fact." There is little ministry to brooding egotism in them; except that sometimes a very callow pupil may for a while feel that the mastery of a few rudiments somehow covers him prematurely with the glory that properly belongs to the great discoverers; but from this stage he soon recovers. There is always a freshness and out-of-door healthful-

ness about even the simplest work in natural science that makes it a charming study, for the lower schools, especially. Mr. Spencer has well pointed out its adaptation, on this score, even to the period of childhood. It is, in fact, so far as it includes only the observation of outside nature, an invigorating play of the mind, rather than a laborious work. And the need of this health-giving intellectual play we never outgrow.

But the attractiveness of these natural studies must not be allowed to blind us to the need, when it comes to forming a course for the maturer mind, of more abstract and complex subjects. The sciences in their higher and severer regions, where the mind of man has more and more mingled itself with the mere facts of nature, as in wide comparative views and the induction of great principles; and especially the purely human studies, the languages, histories, philosophies, literatures, — these must be the food and light of the larger growth of the mind. The law of intellectual development in education seems to be analogous to a certain familiar law of physical growth in lower organisms. The very lowest, the vegetable, is able to nourish itself directly on the crude inorganic elements of nature: the higher, the animal, can only be nourished on matter al-

ready organized by life. Somewhat so, apparently, with the growth of intellect: while the simpler faculties, such as we share with other animals, are able to get their full development from the sights and sounds of nature alone, the deeper feelings and the higher intellectual processes can be best nourished on the outcome of the human spirit — nature and life as organized, or reorganized, by the mind of man.

In meeting the public on this matter of the course of study, the college finds itself confronted with two or three false notions, so inveterate that they may well be classed as popular delusions. Each of these, like most popular delusions, has crystallized round a convenient phrase.

One such notion is that the choice of studies for any given youth should be governed by his own natural predispositions. In other words, he should "follow his bent." This has a plausible sound, yet to apply it to the college course would be to ignore the very purpose of the college. When it comes to selecting a life occupation, a specialty for study or practice, such as the various schools of the university undertake to furnish, a youth should, no doubt, choose according to his taste and talent. But to choose on that ground alone in his preparatory culture-course would simply magnify any

lack of balance in his original nature. As well might one advise a boy at the gymnasium to devote himself to those exercises in which he naturally excelled, to the neglect of all that found out his weak points; if the arms were feeble, to use only the muscles of the thighs; if the thighs were undeveloped, to use only the arms. The purpose of the college is to do for mind and character what the gymnasium does for the physical powers: to build up the man all round. If the student "hates mathematics," it is probably because his mind is naturally weak on the side of abstract reasoning, and the hated study is therefore the very study he needs. If he has a lofty disdain of literature, it is very likely only an evidence of some lack of that side of culture somewhere in his ancestry. There is nothing sacred about a "bent." So far from being an indication of Providence, it is apt to be a mere indication of hereditary defect. If we look at it from the side of its being a predisposition to weakness in some particular directions, a bent *away* from certain lines of study (the form in which it chiefly shows itself in college), we can see that the sooner it is repaired by a generous mental diet, the better for the man and for the race to whose ideal perfection he and his posterity are to contribute. Perhaps the greatest danger to

which the higher education is at present exposed is that of spreading before the student a vast number of miscellaneous subjects, all recommended as equally valuable, and inviting him to choose according to his bent. The result naturally is that the average boy follows that universal bent of human nature toward the course that offers him the easiest time. If this course happens to include strong studies, easy only because he is specially interested in them, the harm is not so great; but if it consists chiefly of light studies, introduced into the curriculum only because somebody was there to teach them, and somebody else wanted them taught (and perhaps a little, too, because each counts one in a catalogue), then the harm is enormous. This becomes evident enough if we use (as we may for brevity's sake be permitted to do) the *reductio ad absurdum* of an extreme illustration; if we suppose that some language having a great history and a great literature, the Greek, for example, is rejected in favor of some barbarous tongue embodying neither history nor literature; say, for example, the Pawnee or the Eskimo; or if we suppose that for exercises in writing and reasoning is substituted the collecting of postage-stamps of all nations, or practice on the guitar. Far short of any such violent extremes, there are

perfectly well recognized differences between the efficacy of one study and another in educating a college student. And it would seem wiser to trust the choice to the governing body of the college than to an inexperienced lad, swayed by some momentary whim, or by the class-tradition of the "easiness" of one subject or another; in other words, by his natural bent.

Another popular delusion concerning the college course hinges on a common misuse of the word *practical*. It properly signifies *effectual in attaining one's end*. So, transferring the term to persons, we call him a *practical* man who habitually employs such means. A "practical study," then, is in reality a study which is calculated to effect the end we have in view in pursuing it. And since the end in view of a college study is purely and simply the development of the mind and character, any study is a practical study just to the extent that it is effectual for this end. And any study is a completely unpractical study, no matter how useful it may be for other purposes, if it is ineffectual for this. The real virus of people's misuse of this word lies in their taking it to mean, not effectual for one's end, whatever it be, but effectual for that particular end which to them happens to seem the chief end

of man. If a man's one aim is to have a successful farm, he is apt to consider all studies unpractical that do not bear directly on agriculture. If the great object of another is to gain public office, to him that study alone seems "practical" which directly subserves this end. Accordingly, there are always found well-meaning persons, not conversant with educational affairs, who consider the best studies, and those which for college purposes are most practical, as being completely unpractical; and who will always be trying to crowd in upon its courses those so-called practical studies, which, for the ends the college has in view, would prove as unpractical as studies could be.

It furnishes a favorite phrase for those who thus misconceive the purpose of a liberal education, to say that it fails to fit a man for the "struggle of life." If the phrase means the making of a living, this objection certainly seems not well founded. Any one's daily observation of common life will enable him to answer the question whether or not liberally educated men are, relatively to the rest of the community, making a comfortable living. When, however, we come to notice that some of those who are fondest of this complaint against the college course, on their own account, do not seem to stand in any conspicu-

ous need of a living, we are led to suspect that they may mean something else by the "struggle of life." Perhaps some mean by this phrase the strife for sudden wealth, or for political office, prizes for which, in fact, a good deal of violent "struggling" is done. So far from inciting men to any such feverish struggle, it may be hoped that the higher education will always raise them above the disposition for it, or the temptation to it. Public reputation and public office should, we are beginning once more to believe, "seek the man;" and they may be depended on to find him as fast as he deserves them. If not in the scramble and struggle of certain ignoble regions of effort, at least in the legitimate pursuit of any dignified career, men succeed in the long run by means of their character and intelligence; and the more completely these have been developed, the surer the success. Such a completeness the present college course is generally admitted to have an observed tendency, at least, to produce.

However much it may lack of perfection, the common criticisms upon it seem wide of the mark: whether it be the charge that there are not enough electives for every possible taste or bent; or that the studies are not practical enough; or that they fail to fit a man for the "struggle of life." For these complaints

are all based on the same fundamental misconception, the supposition, namely, that the purpose of the college is merely to equip the man; when in reality its purpose is, first of all, to evolve the man. They all overlook this central idea of the higher education: that its aim is not merely to add something to the man from without, as convenience or equipment; but to produce a certain change in him from within as growth and power. The misconception seems all the more short-sighted, in that it fails to perceive that the most valuable equipment for any work whatever that may afterward be undertaken is found in this very breadth and depth of preparatory development.

Two permanent human desires, on the surface antagonistic, but at bottom perfectly reconcilable, have all along been at work in moulding systems of education. One is the desire to *be* much, or the desire for attainment; the other is the desire to *get* much, or the desire for acquisition. As we look at young people, we find that we have both these desires for their future. We would have them amount to a great deal, in themselves: we may call this our *aspiration* for them; and we would have them get on in life: we may call this our *ambition* for them. As we look at the commu-

nity we feel these same two desires: we would have it a community of wise and noble persons; and we would have it a prosperous community.

Now our educational work has taken on one character or another, according as *aspiration* or *ambition* has been most prominently in mind. Some, perceiving that we are all "people of whom more might have been made," have been most impressed with the importance of lifting men's personal lives to higher planes. Others have felt most the need of equipping men for special efficiency in the various callings of life. Not the college only, but the entire field of education, from kindergarten to university, has been a battle-ground where these two ideas, unwisely supposing themselves natural foes, have continually fought. But both these desires are in the right. Seen in the larger view there is no possible *casus belli* between them. They are reconciled the moment it is seen to be true that the completest development is itself the most valuable equipment.

Fortunately, the colleges have for the most part taken this larger view, and have courageously kept their courses in accord with it, in spite of efforts from outside to warp them from their true purpose of providing an *education* for men, to that of providing an *occupation*

for them; and corresponding efforts to have the *educative* studies removed, and *occupative* studies substituted in their stead.

That the college course will be further improved, as it has been constantly improving in the past, no one can doubt. The important thing is that changes, when they are made, should be made with a clear understanding of the purpose of the college, and in furtherance of this. It would not be best (if, once more, a violently absurd example may be pardoned) that Eskimo should be substituted for Greek on a vicious and sophistical ground; such as, for instance, that a young man might some time go on a diplomatic mission to Greenland, and might find it a convenient language to have. Nor should practice on the guitar be substituted for literary exercises, on any such ground as that it is well received in society, and, for purposes of instruction in the female seminaries, might at any moment be a valuable equipment for the struggle of life.

The greatest advance in college work is probably to be expected from improved methods of treatment, rather than from radical changes of the subjects of the course. Much of the elementary work in the languages, both ancient and modern, will no doubt eventually be relegated to the lower schools. More and

more the classics will be taught as literatures. The same change, it may be hoped, will some time invade even the modern language courses, so that they will have less of the Ollendorff character, the mere conversational drill, conceived as being useful or ornamental for the "struggle," and more of the character of an intellectual study of the modern European mind in its history and literature. So also in the natural sciences, the lower schools will doubtless one day do a large part of what now the colleges are doing; much of that mere observation and memory, namely, which is not beyond the capacity of the ordinary boy or girl of high-school age.

One college study there is, in particular, which may be expected to make great advances in its scope and methods. It is a study which has for a long time appeared on all the catalogues, but which, so far as any adequate development is concerned, is still in its infancy. This study, the History of English Literature, has too largely consisted in the mere memorizing of disconnected facts and dates as found in some one or two text-books. And so far as the real authors of our literature have been studied at all, it has been with much too exclusive a regard to philology. Even in this comparatively superficial aspect of the subject, its

study has been confined, commonly, to a few poets of the early period. The outside shell of literature, the language, has been taught with much acumen and nice scholarship; but the substance, the thing itself, has been neglected. It remains to be seen what educating force there will prove to be in the proper study of this subject when it shall include the history of English thought, of which English literature is only the expression; and when it shall bring the student face to face with the best minds of modern as well as of ancient times.

Life

WANTED — A FRIEND

WE hear of people's seeking by public advertisement for a suitable partner in marriage, but who ever heard of any one's advertising for a friend? Yet why not? Every one, it is likely, has in mind some more or less vague ideal of the absolutely perfect comrade. May he not be supposed to exist somewhere, and to be in the habit of reading a daily newspaper or a monthly magazine? Go to! let us seek him, then, by appropriate advertisement. Something in this wise would it run? "WANTED, *a Friend!* The undersigned, having existed in comparative solitude long enough to experience a pretty keen desire for 'some one to whom to say, "How sweet is solitude!"' and having as yet met no one who exactly satisfies his idea, would beg hereby to announce his need. The applicant must be rather old, in order to be fitted to give advice — a limited amount of it

— wisely ; and at the same time rather young, in order to receive it in liberal quantity and in a meek frame of mind. He must be of medium height, intellectually, and in the enjoyment of robust spiritual health. A written guarantee must be given of freedom from all contagious defects of character. He must be a thoroughly disillusioned and 'advanced' person, and yet be able to sympathize with any little illusions or superstitions of the subscriber. His heart must be full of love for men in the abstract, but entirely devoid, as yet, of affection for any particular one of them. He should, however, be able to exhibit satisfactory scars of early love-affairs, and a more or less scorched aspect of spirit from some previous period of *weltschmerz*. Thus he will be ready to shed furtive tears at any pathetic fragments of autobiography the subscriber may mingle in his conversation. He will also be expected to look unutterable things when his own past in general is alluded to, but never to mention any of it in tiresome detail. His memory must be enriched with portions of the subscriber's writings, which he will quote on frequent occasions with a happy spontaneity ; and he must hold the unbiased opinion that his friend is the greatest violin amateur, marine painter, poet, polo player, and master of English prose style of our own or any

other time. He must be on similar intimate terms with several other equally, or almost equally, important personages, whose private affairs he will communicate, and whom he will backbite to the subscriber in an entertaining manner. The applicant must undertake that, when they dine together at restaurants, he will never order the viands, in return for which concession he will from time to time be permitted to pay the bill. In walking on public streets, the applicant will carry his face well turned round and his ears pricked up toward the subscriber, so as to hear him easily without forcing him to deviate from the fixed carriage of his own head, so necessary to his conception of himself as a masterful and positive character. The same rule will be adhered to in conversing together in the cars, especially when the subscriber chooses to keep his own face turned away toward the window, and still to continue speaking in his ordinary low and dignified tone of voice. The applicant must have inherited or acquired a fondness for hearing manuscript read, and will never commit the indiscretion of attempting to read any of his own. For this and other good reasons, — N. B., — no person of the literary class need apply."

Yet, seriously, if one cannot exactly publish

an advertisement for the purpose, might there not be ways, open to persons even of the most sensitive taste, of extending the possibilities of intimate human relations beyond the small circle of haphazard association? It is a curious thing to reflect on, that this connection of two persons in friendship, while it is one of the most important facts in their lives, is one of the things left most completely to chance. We do not go out, some fine morning, and examine all the diverse characters in our environment, and deliberately choose this or that one for a friend. It is left rather to mere "accident, blind contact, or strong necessity of loving." A natural reason for this, it may be said, is that the case of friendship is unique among human relations in the fact that the choice must necessarily be mutual. It would be awkward, that is to say, if, after making a deliberate examination of the whole field, we should choose, and not be chosen. Another difficulty in the way of wisely making a free selection among any great number of persons is that, after all, however wide our circle may happen to be, it is only wide relatively to circles which are very narrow. The largest round of acquaintance has but a small circumference in the great mass of humanity. With the greatest number of those included, moreover, it covers

but a "speaking acquaintance." The most experienced and the most widely circulated of us have been able to "summer and winter" but a very few people. Sometimes I think the only men I really know are those who were in college with me. This is not on the principle "*in vino veritas*," but on another principle that might well be embodied in a Latin maxim, if it is not, "*in juventute veritas;*" which is not quite the same as saying that "children and fools speak the truth." This is probably the real reason, by the way, that all through life there are never any friends like the college friends, — there are never any whom we know so through and through; and out of perfect knowledge comes the only perfect trust.

Whatever the difficulties in the way of a wider reach of friendships, it does not seem reasonable that we should be so shut up to the small geographical limitations of our village or city, or "set." Why might not people seek out friends for their friends? There would be nothing odious about that sort of match-making. I know and love a man in California, for example, who is just suited to a man I know and love in Berlin. Why do I not bring them together? When one prints a book, or even a magazine article, and some kindred spirit, hitherto unknown, is courageous enough to

follow his sensible first impulse (instead of letting that sullen goblin, the sober second thought, fling cold water all over it), and writes to say he likes it, why may not this sometimes be followed up, and become the basis of something worth while? (Of course there are always ear-marks in any such letter, to distinguish that of him who writes because he likes your thought and that of him who writes because he likes to say so.) In some such ways the half-souls that Plato tells about might find their other halves. Or the quarter-souls might find their other three quarters; for was not Plato's idea inadequate to the fact as to most of us, who need a group of at least three others to make a complete and satisfying integer of companionship?

It is an interesting and yet after all a melancholy reflection that very likely, at this identical instant, there is sitting down to a dinner-table in London, or putting on his gloves in Munich, or walking through the Common in Boston, a person who is more nearly akin to ourselves, and more fitted in every way to be our dearest friend, than any one of those whom chance has hitherto thrown in our way. For it *was* chance — or (if we do not like the implications of that word) the concatenation of causes uncontrolled by our own volition — that

determined our closest friendship, whatever it is. At the very moment we first took that hand, some other hand, for aught we know, may have brushed by, at no greater distance, on the other side, — a hand that might, it is as likely as not, have *fitted* our own better in every possible respect. How do I know, even as I write these words, and dip my pen in the ink, and pause, but a letter has been addressed in Calcutta or Stockholm which, had it been addressed to me, would have renewed and illuminated my whole future life? But the man and I are fated to be strangers. We have never met, shall never meet. There is no magic telephone threading the air between us; and, if there were, we should only exchange some superficial word. Nothing short of living some segment of life together can make two men into friends. Even letters are of little avail. The best of our epistles do not bring the deep places of our minds into communication. They are hardly more than some less abrupt species of telephonic "hello."

But, for all that, even the oldest and gnarliest of us keep somewhere a vague belief in new possibilities of intercommunion, and sometimes we are moved to sing (under our breath) in such wise as this following: —

TO THE UNKNOWN SOUL

O soul, that somewhere art my very kin,
From dusk and silence unto thee I call!
I know not where thou dwellest: if within
A palace or a hut; if great or small
Thy state and store of fortune; if thou 'rt sad
This moment, or most glad;
The lordliest monarch or the lowest thrall.

But well I know — since thou 'rt my counterpart —
Thou bear'st a clouded spirit; full of doubt
And old misgiving, heaviness of heart
And loneliness of mind; long wearied out
With climbing stairs that lead to nothing sure,
With chasing lights that lure,
In the thick murk that wraps us all about.

As across many instruments a flute
Breathes low, and only thrills its selfsame tone,
That wakes in music while the rest are mute,
So send thy voice to me! Then I alone
Shall hear and answer; and we two will fare
Together, and each bear
Twin burdens, lighter now than either one.

ROMANTIC DISPOSITIONS

WHAT is the essential quality in that view of life which we are accustomed to call "romantic?" What is it that constitutes yonder amiable friend of ours a "romantic" person? What was it about that pretty notion, expressed a moment ago, that made us call it a "romantic" notion? To begin with, it is plainly something that we regard with disfavor. It evidently implies, in a character, a lack of good sense; in an idea, a lack of solid truth. Furthermore, it appears to belong to the region of views concerning the future; we do not speak of "romantic" ideas of what has happened, but of what will happen. A "romantic" person is one who indulges in "romantic" expectations. Will not this, then, answer for a definition? A *romantic* disposition is a disposition to expect ends without means; a *romantic* notion is a notion that the desirable thing will somehow happen, without our having made any adequate provision for it. This use of the word originated, of course, from the term *romances;* the idea being that things in real life

may be expected to turn out as they do in the story-books. We must not make the mistake of supposing that the romances are therefore responsible for the prevalence of romantic notions. If there is a relation of cause and effect here at all, it is the other way round. The irrational views of life in the story-books have always had their origin in the perennial romanticism of the human mind.

For, if we are willing to come to the dissecting-room for a moment, who of us will not be found to have his mind infested with romantic ideas of life? Dear youth, you step up trippingly to the examination, for you have not yet so much as come to the knowledge that there *are* false views of life, — illusions, *idola;* as yet, whatsoever impressions you find in your fresh young brain seem to you, as a matter of course, to be the correct, and the only possible correct, ones. But, nevertheless, as I tenderly remove the *os frontis* and the *dura* and the *pia mater*, there come swarming out a wonderful flight of preposterous notions, thick as the vague moth-imps from Pandora's casket. And you, mature, world-wise citizen, that have arrived at full knowledge of the abundant existence of illusions in other men's minds, — I know you for the sport of many a delusive expectation; there are *muscæ volitantes* as big

as moons dancing about over your wise-looking eyes. And even you, too, my ancient Jacques, my self-confident old cynic, — we understand why you have found life a perpetual disappointment: it is because you have perpetually expected some metaphysical fourth dimension of happiness to develop itself spontaneously in your affairs.

But Francis Bacon said all this much more briefly, and therefore much better. "Doth any man doubt," quoth he, "that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, *flattering hopes*, false valuations, *imaginations as one would*, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?" His drift just here is to the point that these unsubstantial pith-contents of men's brains make, on the whole, for contentment and agreeable living. But this might well be disputed. In the days when the youngsters used to beset me for questions suitable to debate in their clubs and societies, I wonder I never thought to give them this: *Whether illusions be conducive to happiness.* Bacon, it should be noted, takes care to say just afterward, "But howsoever these things are thus *in men's depraved judgments and affections*, yet truth . . . is the sover-

eign good of human nature." So that after all the boys might quote the philosopher on both sides of their question.

"*Flattering hopes*," "*imaginations as one would*," — I have italicized these as belonging especially to the brain-pith of the romantic disposition. Do we not know them very well, and recognize them as we lean carefully over the edge of our mind and peer down into the dark mirror of our own consciousness? — the hope to have friends without being friendly, and to be loved without being lovely; the hope to become famous without ever producing "works meet for" fame-winning; the hope to be rich without the work or the wit to effect it, or any reliable lien on luck that should be trusted to help; the hope that *she* — some definite or some "not impossible she" — will fall into our arms, unwooed and unwon, like a ripe apple into a basket left accidentally under the tree. "*Flattering* hopes," because they all imply that we are somehow favorites of the Powers, exceptions to the laws of inertia and gravitation. "Imaginations as one *would*," — not only the dreaming of what we wish things were (which would be a harmless enough amusement), but the dreaming that things are as we wish them, — this marks well the distinction between the positive or scientific mind and the fanciful or

romantic mind. The one tries to imagine how things really are; the other tries to imagine things as they are not and cannot be.

There are two little old tales that I like, as illustrating romantic expectations in common life: one, of the rustic lad, who was sent to sell a load of pumpkins in the city, and who returned at night with his cart still heaping full, reporting that he had driven through all the streets, and nobody had said a word to him about pumpkins; the other, of the dairy-maid, who sat all day in the middle of the field upon her milking-stool, and "not a cow came up to be milked."

It is a mark of a great poet when we find universal life-truths crystallized into a few lines of a poem, possibly for the first time, or certainly never so well expressed before. In the "Spanish Gypsy," Fedalma is seated on a bank in mournful meditation, when Hinda comes to bring her

> "A branch of roses —
> So sweet, you 'll love to smell them. 'T was the last.
> I climbed the bank to get it before Tralla,
> And slipped and scratched my arm. But I don't mind.
> You love the roses — so do I. I wish
> The sky would rain down roses, as they rain
> From off the shaken bush. Why will it not?
> Then all the valley would be pink and white
> And soft to tread on. . . .

Over the sea, Queen, where we soon shall go,
Will it rain roses?
"*Fedalma.* No, my prattler, no!
It never will rain roses: *when we want*
To have more roses, we must plant more trees."

Is there anywhere in literature so perfect a picture of the romantic and the positive dispositions of mind?

THE GOOD THINGS OF OUR FRIEND AS HIS COMPENSATIONS

Of course unreasonable people must necessarily be more or less unhappy. The moon is always there in plain sight, and nobody to bring it to their hand. But it seems as if reasonable people, in the absence of acute pain or especial disaster, might contrive to be *reasonably happy*. The very phrase contains the limitation: happy, that is to say, up to the point that sound reason could expect, considering the inevitables, — the conditions, as it were of the lease.

One of the medicinal truths that would seem obvious to any such reasonable person, and yet one that we are apt to lose sight of, is this: The good thing that our friend enjoys is only his particular compensation. We forget, or we never have perceived, the otherwise intolerable ills of his situation. Seeing only the compensation, we think it ought to make him perfectly happy. We are certain it would make us happy, if we had it.

My city friend, for example, makes me a

three days' visit. I take him on my three favorite walks. The first day we go through the gorge of the river. The stream, glad to be done with its work in the village mills, goes dancing down through a deep, rocky ravine. Dark hemlocks lean from the cliffs, and others below cling with their writhen roots to huge cubical blocks of sandstone, fallen in the frosts of a thousand winters. Alders, feathery birches, and the white stems of sycamores catch the sunshine and brighten the interspaces. Mosses and ferns soften the outlines of the jagged rocks. It is early autumn, and the gay colors of unfallen leaves streak the whole length of the ravine, with the shadowy hemlock for contrast; and the river, rich brown with recent rains, streams along like a curving stripe in some splendid agate. When the south wind comes soughing up the gorge, it is all one solemn song, with river voices and forest voices commingled. "Ah!" exclaims my city friend; "if I could have a retreat like this within ten minutes' walk of the *ager compascuus* at home in Botolfium!"

The second day I take him to the little silver lake that lies like a mirror in its oval frame of woodlands. We approach it through a country lane, between fields of ripened corn. There is a fragrance of apples from farm orchards, and we seem to see Keats's "Autumn,"

> "Sitting careless on a granary floor,
> Her hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind,
> Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
> Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while her hook
> Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers."

The ruddy western sun throws a long slant of shadow from the woods that come close down to one sandy margin, keeping off the wind, and reflecting darkly in a reach of water so smooth as to be almost invisible. From the centre across to the opposite shore the breeze continually casts and draws its net of darkling ripples. On its stilt, at the upper end of the lake, a white crane stands motionless, and now and then a young bass flips winking out of the glassy water, as if to dare him from his statuesque repose. "Ah!" exclaims my friend again; "if I only had this in place of the hallowed but somewhat unexciting *Lacus Rararum!*"

The third day we go the Great Woods, — woods of such trees as can be seen only here in the Middle West, near the southern shore of Lake Weary. A mere New Englander can never see at home such stately forest growth: white oaks, and hickories, and chestnuts, and pepperidges, and tulip-trees. The long aisles, carpeted with the first bright fallen leaves, stretch far away among straight and towering

columns. Shafts of low and mellowed sunshine light up other aerial aisles; here tracing the sharp shadow of an oak spray against a smooth beech bole, there gilding the already golden yellow of a hickory-top, or just flicking a quick red squirrel as he leaps from the side branch of his chestnut-tree larder to that of his oak-tree bedroom. For a moment it is perfectly still, and you hear a nut drop, and a chipmunk pipe his shrill claim to its possession. Then a breeze rustles the top of a pepperidge, and tosses out and down an armful of crimson leaves. "Ah!" sighs my friend; "if we could only have all this on the *claustrum molare!*"

I have vexations, hindrances, depths of dumps, with such surroundings? He would not be able to believe it, if I should hint at such a thing.

By and by, when the "winter of our discontent" is well settled down upon these rustic regions, I pay my friend, in turn, a visit of three days in Botolfium. He feasts me on picture-galleries; he leaves me blissfully buried for half a day in the Minervan library; he electrifies me with intellectual company; he intoxicates me with the symphony concert. "Oh!" I exclaim to myself; "if these things but grew at home in the woods of the *Conservatio Occidentalis! He* unhappy *here?* Impossible!"

But when I come to reflect, I am aware that he, too, probably has infelicities that he could hardly bear but by the assuagement of these very compensations. He would most likely tell me that it is only by the hardest discipline, even *with* the pictures, and the books, and the brains, and the orchestra, that he can put up with ——, and ——, and ——!

If only the world could have been so constructed as to let us enjoy other people's compensations, without the ills for which they compensate! Then,

> "This earth had been the Paradise
> It never looked to human eyes,
> Since Adam left his garden yet."

CHOOSING A CLASS OF PEOPLE FOR EXTERMINATION

In the midst of a queer higglety-pigglety dream, last night, I thought the Great Panjandrum appeared to me with the kind offer to have some one class of my fellow beings immediately exterminated; provided I could, without taking too much of his valuable time, decide which particular class it should be. Just seven minutes were given in which to make and announce the decision. Of course I accepted with alacrity, and at once hastened to run over in my mind such of the obnoxious varieties of human nature as could most speedily be recalled. At first I thought I would select the people who do not answer letters; but I reflected that sometimes we write letters in haste, which had better be answered at leisure, long leisure, or even not at all, on the principle that the least said, soonest mended. Then I dallied for a moment with the idea that it should be those who, hearing us say things in joke, straightway report them as things said in earnest. Surely, thought I to myself, we can't go amiss in having this

venomous species obliterated! But as the genial destroyer looked at his watch a little impatiently, I hurriedly recollected certain other deserving candidates. There were those who always allow for everybody else's being late at appointments, and so afflict the punctual soul with a quarter of an hour of painful fidgets; and those who send us lukewarm verses, with a request for an introduction to the favorable notice of the editors of the great magazines; and those who borrow tennis-rackets and sheet-music; and the book-store attendants who tag us around with recommendations of the latest inanities; and the botherhood [*sic*] of locomotive engineers who agonize the ear at night with gratuitous shrieks as of whistling fiends; and the literary ladies who follow up our plainest observations with praise of how nicely, or prettily, or nobly, or something, it was said.

"Six minutes and three quarters," whispered the Grand Panjandrum, punching at me with his sceptre, and knocking his little round button at top against the ceiling, as he hastily rose. I made one more rapid snatch among my recollections of people who are with difficulty to be endured, and cried, "Take those who carry a perpetual countenance of cold displeasure, and contrive to make each member of the house-

hold, or the company, feel that he is at all times the special object of it!" The departing monster nodded benignly over his shoulder and winked, as who should say, "You have chosen well!"

THE NOUVEAU CULTIVÉ

THE *nouveaux riches*, as a class, have been a good deal before the public, and their appearance and habits, both in the wild state and under domestication, are pretty familiar to all keen observers of the wonders of natural history. But there is another class in modern society, equally noteworthy, and in some respects even more preposterous and disagreeable, that seems to have escaped classification. It is that species of person whom we may denominate the *nouveau cultivé*. Sprung from illiterate stock in some uncivilized region, he has suddenly been plunged into an accidental penumbra of culture when well along in years. He has been "caught late." He has, accordingly, a most vivid appreciation of those things which seem to him to mark the difference between his present advanced position and his previous backward state. The little that he now knows is very conspicuous to him and to his relatives. His faith in certain second-rate makers of public opinion, especially since he has traveled and has seen the Building where

these powerful things are produced, is very touching. He has religious convictions concerning the greatness of Washington Irving and Fitz-Greene Halleck, and perhaps of Young, Pollock, and Mrs. Hemans. He has read that Jeffrey said to Macaulay, "Where did you get that style?" and he, too, wonders where such a magnificent thing could have been found. Sometimes he copies passages, in hopes to acquire it for his own contributions to the county paper. He loves to quote from "quaint old" this one and that one; and has bought, but not yet read, a copy of Chaucer, because, as he is proud to explain to his family, he was a "well of English undefyled." His wife has presented to him a brief handbook of the history of art, and they have learned a good many of the dates. This gives them a contempt for the plain people who like and tack up woodcuts and still take comfort in Christmas-cards. They have read a little of "Dant," not without some secret struggles with the "I-talian" names; and greatly commiserate those who have not the advantage of familiarity with "Doar's" great illustrations.

All this is before the *nouveau cultivé* moves to the city. At that epoch the interesting creature enters on a second stage of development, but still very late. If the first was that

of the larva, this is that of the chrysalis; but it is too far along in the season ever to produce a perfect butterfly. If the larva was active and aggressive, the chrysalis is appropriately cold and impassive. It has acquired a shell, and has a glazed expression of countenance, indicative of mysterious processes going on within. The man has mastered the code of dress, equipage, and etiquette; and so lately that he is greatly impressed with these things, makes his daughters and nieces shed tears for their errors, and rarely misses, himself. He not only acquires the correct pronunciation of "*clever*," with the genuine imported *chiar-oscuro* of the final syllable, but he learns to apply the word to the proper books and persons, and does this with almost painful frequency. He is wonderfully sure of the received verdicts on works of literature and art. If you happen to question any of them, or intimate a preference for some new man, it is comical, and yet a little vexing, for all your philosophy, to see how your lifelong weariness of the old orthodox judgment is taken for that ignorance of it from which he himself has so lately emerged. On the other hand, it is with an exquisitely benevolent condescension that he gives you the last twaddle as superseding your view of some one of the immortals.

There is, however, one consideration that should reconcile us to any and all of the social infelicities connected with the existence of this class of the *nouveaux cultivés*. It is the fact of the better outlook for the next generation that comes from even the slightest lift to this. If the father only gets so far as to perform awkward and ludicrous antics on the front door-steps of culture, the children will certainly have a better chance of entering in than if he never had come out of the woods at all.

THE LEFT-OVER EXPRESSION OF COUNTENANCE

THERE are certain humorous sidewalk observations that are open to one as a kind of compensation for having to elbow and jostle along the public ways. One of these is the trick people have of looking at you with the left-over remainders of the expression of face just bestowed on the companion with whom they are walking and talking. A pair of persons engaged in lively argument are approaching you. One of them is laying down the law with great vigor of facial and muscular gesture. At the moment of brushing by he glances at you, with the ferocious scowl of his fervid eloquence still puckering his features. You would think he was your bitterest foe. Of course it would be opposed to the great law of economy of force to have relaxed and then puckered up again just for the momentary meeting of another face. Perhaps his apparatus of facial expression is not agile enough to have accomplished the manœuvre if he had tried.

Shortly after, you encounter Saccharissima

and Dulcissima, chatting and laughing together as they come. They are entire strangers to you, but as you pass you receive a most captivating smile, — from both of them this time, as it happens, for both are talking at once. It produces an effect like those momentary streaks of warm air through which one suddenly walks on an autumn day.

Sometimes you get a mixed expression, with much the effect of a stream of warm and of cold water poured on the head at the same time. The eyes, which are the more mobile portion of the expressional apparatus, will nimbly alter their look, at the instant of meeting you, to that freezing glance appropriate to the encounter of an un-introduced fellow creature. The mouth, meanwhile, with its attendant cheek-curves, continues the companionable smile, thus bridging over the interruption, and allowing the conversation to go on with its atmosphere unchanged.

Occasionally it happens, however, that the mixture was already in the original expression. We all know that blood-curdling look which passes between eminently civil people, wherein the eyes remain distant and stony, while the unfortunate mouth (which — for its sins, perhaps — always has to do the hypocrisy for the whole countenance) is forced to maintain an

expansive mechanical smile. Thus I meet, of a morning, two middle-aged ladies engaged in polite exchange of views upon the weather. Rival boarding-house keepers, possibly. The effect now is quite complex. They are already wearing, for each other, the mixed expression referred to, and in glancing at you each infuses an additional drop of vitriol into the ocular and adjustable part of her look. This momentary contact with expressions that were intended for other people is singularly noticeable on the road in meeting open carriages. Sometimes on a crisp afternoon, when everybody is out and all are animated, it is like encountering an intermittent running fire of faces: some real rifle-shots (such as Emerson describes), and with explosive bullets at that; others, the mere sugar-plum artillery of the Carnival, — and none of them intended for you particularly. It is merely that you happen to intervene in the line of fire. An effect of this sort is when two crowded open horse-cars meet and pass. Here you have, not single shots, but the simultaneous discharge of a whole battery of divers facial howitzers.

Perhaps the oddest case of this persistence of previous expressions is where you have stopped a moment to speak with a lady on a village sidewalk. You are only slightly ac-

quainted, and neither your mutual relation nor the business in hand calls for anything but a very indifferent and matter-of-fact cast of countenance. But suddenly, in the middle of a sentence, this daughter of Eve is aware of a favorite young gentleman bowing and smiling from a rapidly passing carriage. Without moving her head, — there is not time for that, — but only her eyes, she flashes on her vanishing friend a bewitchingly intimate smile. Then she instantly looks back to you and finishes the business sentence, with the remains of this charming but now queerly incongruous glance fading out of her face in a most interesting manner. It is like watching the last tint of sunset vanishing from a mountain peak, or a pretty little wave ebbing back on the beach, or the closing of a flower at night, or the putting up of the shutters on the village apothecary shop at bedtime.

I remember an appalling instance of such a phenomenon that occurred to me when a child. Even at this late day, whenever I vividly recall the scene, it gives me a chill. It was in a Virgil class, and I was a poor little palpitating new scholar. While I was anxiously construing the opening lines of the Dido-in-the-storm episode, the beetle-browed master turned slyly to a privileged older pupil with some *sotto voce*

schoolmaster's joke. As I glanced up, having partly heard the words without catching the point, he was just turning back to me, with a most genial and winning smile sweetening his usually acid features. Innocently, and no doubt with some timidly responsive look on my face, I said, "What?" But on the instant of speaking I divined that, alas! the grin was not meant for me. It was a case of left-over remainder. As it ceased to "coldly furnish forth" his rapidly congealing countenance, he bade me in a stern voice to "go on." It was much as if he had cried, "What right have *you* to be smiling at me, you miserable little sinner?"

But I have known over-sensitive persons of larger growth to have their disagreeable moments with these "remainder biscuits" of expression. For example, I have an unhappy friend who has all his life been intermittently ridden with the idea that he is in some way ridiculous. I can never find him really happy and at his ease except in his library or his garden. The books and the chickens, he says, do not laugh at him. Whether it be the effect on his nerves of tea-drinking, or of living too much alone, or of having been brought up by homespun people, to whom his artistic tastes really did appear ridiculous, and who took no pains to conceal the fact, — whatever the

cause, there is nothing of which he has such terror as the "laughter of fools" directed against himself. Lately I set myself seriously to combat this fancy. I said, "Let us go out together on the street, or into company, and see if you can show me any reliable instances of people's laughing at you."

The first persons we happened to encounter, after leaving the house, were two sauntering schoolgirls, satchels on arm, maxillaries active, and one was telling the other with infinite secrecy — as if the very lamp-posts were sure to be listening — some wonderful experience, such as only schoolgirls have. As my friend and I approached them, it appeared that the climax of the narrative had just been reached. Glancing up at us unconsciously, as we met, they continued to giggle, and passed on. "There! you see!" said my friend. And I had much ado to convince him that it was only a case of left-over expression.

THE KEEPER-IN AND THE BLURTER-OUT

Two good friends of mine have now for years stood to my mind as types of two opposite dispositions with regard to secretiveness. The one never seems to say anything without pausing first to consider within himself whether, after all, it might not be better not to say it. The other seems never to let any

> "Craven scruple
> Of thinking too precisely on the event"

hinder her from the utterance of whatever she has to say. The one I call a keeper-in ; the other, a blurter-out. It has been an interesting study with me to observe these two characters, and the results of their two methods both on others and on themselves.

The keeper-in would appear, at first sight, to have all the wisdom on his side. He certainly has the support of all the "little hoard of maxims." Do not the proverbs all preach a sharp surveillance of that "unruly member," the tongue? Did not the Greek philosopher wag his hoary head, and aver that he had often

been sorry for what he had said, but never for what he had refrained from saying? Does not George Sand testify that, in her experience, words are always dangerous except when they are necessary? And sings not warningly the German poet, —

> "Am Baum des Schweigens hängt
> Seine Frucht, der Friede"?

Nevertheless, I am compelled to record, as the result of my own observations, the opinion that the least harm and the most good have come from the method of the blurter-out. And why not? Are we to admit that there is, on the whole, more evil than good in people's minds to be expressed? Can we believe that "winged words" are oftener envenomed arrows than bearers of good tidings?

No doubt there is a kind of confidence which the keeper-in inspires among his friends. We know that if we impart a secret to him it is safe. We are sure that in any deliberative council, where a word is to be fitly spoken only at a certain moment, he will not go off *semi-retinaculum*. If the success of an undertaking, or the peace of a family, hangs on silence, he will be "golden through and through." But then, on the other hand, we are equally and sadly sure that if there suddenly comes a crisis in our affairs, or in public affairs, where a quick,

courageous utterance is the indispensable thing, the keeper-in can be relied on to fail to utter it. It is true that, in talking with him at my fireside, I can relate to him with perfect confidence the good story of my catching our neighbor at my hen-roost; but then, how can I be sure that our neighbor has not been to him with just such a merry tale (lacking only the basis of fact) about me? How do I know that he esteems me as a truthful and virtuous man, when I am aware that he would look me in the face with the same inscrutable repose of manner if he suspected me of being a liar and a thief?

But with the blurter-out, on the contrary, I know just what she thinks of me, and just what she does not think of me; and I know that she knows that I know, and is glad of it. The only anxiety she appears to have is lest people should suppose she thinks more of them than she does. I have observed a little stir of apprehension in a company when she enters the room, or the conversation. No one knows exactly what she may say next. And it is a pretty thing to see the way in which a certain kindly relative of hers will anxiously bend forward as she talks, ready to whisper a gentle and nudging "Now, Jane!"

I admit that the keeper-in avoids some awk-

ward situations, and that the blurter-out gets into a certain amount of hot water. It might be urged by some that the best course would be a happy mean between the two. But, for my part, I would rather risk it on the penalties of the impetuous truth-teller than to adopt any sort of a happy mean that consists in being meanly happy.

OLD MORTON

The Middle-Western village produces, or confirms into inveteracy when produced, many a queer type of character. In the same way that isolated valleys in mountainous countries develop and preserve distinct idioms of folk-speech, so do these isolated semi-rustic regions exhibit odd dialectic varieties of human nature. One such queer character, or "odd stick," is remembered in our village as "Old Morton." Bent at a crooked right angle, weather-stained and storm-beaten, like a sort of land species of ancient mariner, gray, unkempt, and his arid face visibly consoled by perennial founts of tobacco, the old man was wont to hobble through the village street about once a day, usually at mail-time. For he, too, it was clear, like all the denizens of little towns, and especially those without either correspondence or business, had always great expectations in connection with the unknown possibilities of each day's lean but punctual mail-bag. His only employment and means of support consisted of chance jobs of small joinery in a rickety little

shop on the bank of the river, in the loft of which was his lonely and unseen lair. There never was a more inoffensive creature; he was very gentle with small children and all piteous dumb animals; but his bent-over face had a splenetic gaze down at mother earth, — say, rather, step-mother pavement, — as he made his way along the street, and his old blue eyes looked up at you with a sort of protesting hostility, as if, in the absence of a visible Providence, he took you for a representative of things in general and accused you of his fate. I was comparatively a new-comer in the town, and had never exchanged greetings with him; but one day, as I was hurrying across the stone bridge, he met me, and stopped me with the paralyzing exclamation, "*Ain't ye glad ye ain't old Morton!*" I was never more nonplused and put to it for a reply. What I did respond was, "Who? — *I?*" But whether this counter-interrogative of mine meant anything or not, I have never known. The particular *nuance* of my own inner consciousness that prompted my words had, in my astonishment, evaporated with them, as I found upon asking myself what under the moon I had meant, while I hurried on my way. *His* words I understood well enough, and perhaps mine may have been meant to convey some sudden sense of my

small reason for any such self-gratulation. But it is quite as likely my mental breath was so completely taken away that I made the response in entire idiocy.

I learned afterward that it was a habit of his to address this or a similar question to persons of his acquaintance. His constant idea seemed to be that, whatever the apparent hardness of any other mortal's lot in life, it ought to be a sufficient consolation to him to reflect that, after all, he was not Old Morton.

There was philosophy in the reflection, and I was glad to have imbibed it. In fact, what right had I to grumble and sulk about things, so long as I had not the weak and friendless old man's bent back, and rheumatism, and shattered nerves, and forlorn abandonment?

Once I was waiting at the provision store, on some family errand of "harmless necessary," soap, or sugar, or other village bricabrac (such as it is the pleasant privilege of the literary man of the household, with his apparent plenitude of leisure, to purvey), when I saw the ancient philosopher, sitting on a cracker barrel, and gazing at a pair of urchins whose tow heads barely reached the counter. There was a kind of quizzical and melancholy tenderness in his look. "There 's one good thing about them boys!" he exclaimed with emphasis, as he

caught my eye. "*They won't neither one on 'em never be Old Morton!*" And he evidently felt that in pronouncing this decisive judgment he was, as it were, a benignant oracle, decreeing them a blessed fate.

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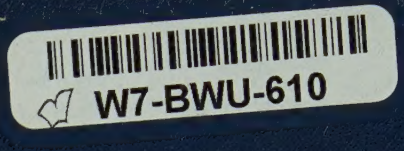
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